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World Soccer

BECKENBAUER

THE BITTERNESS behind the Franz Beckenbauer shock, and the audacious dreams of Bayern Munich's future planning are only just emerging.

But it is already clear, as the ex-West German skipper's £700,000 transfer to New York Cosmos goes through, that it was Beckenbauer himself who instigated the latest, vital talks.

The reason? Anger at what he considered a West German Press campaign against him involving his private life and his recent income tax troubles.

Cosmos have been interested in Beckenbauer for two years. But it was only under the pressures which have been building up lately that Kaiser Franz decided to ask his agent, Robert Schwan, to reopen talks.

Schwan's double role finally brought about his downfall. Since 1965 he had also been Bayern's general manager. Now president Wilhelm Neudecker has kicked him out.

Neudecker had hoped to hold out against the Cosmos offer. Despite an agreement that Bayern would release Beckenbauer free to a foreign club, this was only to take effect at the end of his current contract — and that lasted until June 1979.

For Beckenbauer however the chance to escape the jealousies of Germany and earn nearly £2 million in the United States, was too good to miss.

The only hold-up was between the clubs.

Cosmos agree terms... Bayern Munich kick out General Manager Schwan

by KEIR RADNEDGE

Bayern held out for £750,000, but Cosmos wanted Beckenbauer to buy out his own contract. Beckenbauer refused.

That would cost me too much of YOUR money, he told Cosmos's Clive Toye. And so Cosmos will themselves pay the £700,000 fee.

Meanwhile the ramifications in West German soccer in general have upset more than a few people.

One of them is DFB president Hermann Neuberger, who is now being attacked left, right and centre for letting the cat out of the bag on his desire to see Beckenbauer eventually become national team manager.

It's suggested on Neuberger's behalf that his move was in the hope that national opinion would cause Beckenbauer — like Uwe Seeler in the early sixties — to put aside any thoughts of a lucrative couple of years abroad and put himself at the DFB's service.

But Beckenbauer himself clearly has a very different opinion about public feeling in West Germany. Though Bayern are not so despised, particularly in Northern Germany, as they once were when they were winning everything, there were still whistles and jeers a-plenty for Beckenbauer and his team during and after their recent 5-0 thrashing in Hamburg.

Fans there haven't forgotten the World Cup defeat by East Germany.

Beckenbauer, of course, because of the controversy, dropped out of the West German team to play friendly internationals against Northern Ireland and Yugoslavia.

But his proposed move has led the DFB to ban any more transfers abroad before next year's World Cup Finals. And that has upset Real Madrid's £450,000 bid to replace one German — Paul Breitner — with another, in Borussia Moenchengladbach's Uli Stielicke.

Borussia were ready to release Stielicke, who was understandably most upset when the barrier came down.

"Franz Beckenbauer thought of his financial future at the age of 31. I am doing the same at 22," he said. "Borussia have made me an offer, but I cannot compare it with what Real Madrid are ready to pay." Though Madrid still hope to swing the deal, Neuberger has remained adamant.

"The only exception to the new rule is Beckenbauer," he said. "And we are only doing this because of his past services to the national team."

And so, what of Bayern in all this? Gerd Müller is back in storming form, Sepp Maier has just passed the milestone of 400 *Bundesliga* appearances (only Overath has played more) but the next couple of years will see a revolution.

And incredibly their hope is to be able to rip the heart out of the Liverpool attack to provide the transplant to put them back on top of Europe.

Not only are they hopeful of persuading Kevin Keegan his future lies in West Germany rather than in Spain with Madrid, but they are also casting envious glances in the direction of the Welsh centre forward, John Toshack.

Bayern are about to begin a dramatic clear-out. The Swedish pair, Conny Torstensson and Bjorn Andersson, are both going home. The injury-prone Dane, Kjell Seneca, will be transferred. Franz Roth has just suffered a new leg injury and his playing future is in doubt. Uli Hoeness has gone into hospital for his fourth knee operation in two years; Jupp Kapellman may not stay.

Herberger dies age 80

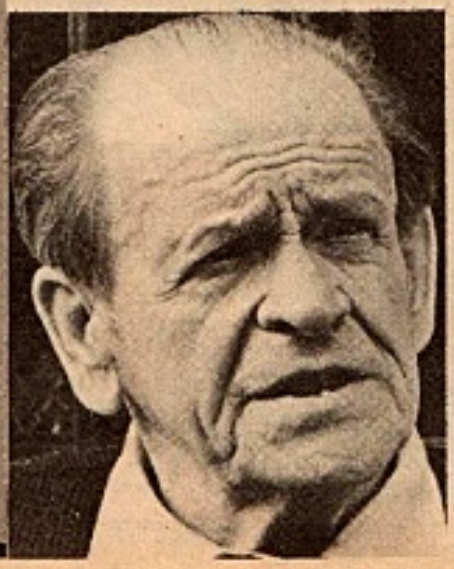
WEST GERMANY'S recent international domination is all owed to the foundations laid by one man — Sepp Herberger, who has died at 80.

Herberger has already gone down as one of the greatest managers of all — with his outstanding triumph being West Germany's shock 3-2 win over Hungary in the 1954 World Cup Final in Berne.

That, in fact, was the 100th international he had taken a part in since winning his first cap as a player in 1921. After retiring in 1930 he attended evening classes at the Berlin Sports Gymnasium to learn more about management, and succeeded Otto Nerz as Germany's boss after the 1936 World Cup.

In all he guided Germany, Greater Germany and West Germany in 162 internationals until he retired in 1964, pushing Helmut Schoen forward from his assistant to become his successor.

Apart from the 1954 World Cup win, Herberger also steered the Germans to fourth place in 1958 and the quarter finals in 1962. His 1954 team recently held a party in honour of "Der Chef", to celebrate his 80th birthday.



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FRONT COVER PICTURE

Action from an Italian League match between Torino (red) and Juventus.

Names in the news

ELIAS FIGUEROA'S return to Palestino in his native Chile after a seven year exile in Uruguay and Brazil has paid off straight away. Palestino have just won the Chilean Cup, beating Union Espanola 4-3 in the final after extra time. The teams were level 3-3 after 90 minutes. Figueroa is the South American player of the year.

GERD MÜLLER has wasted no time getting back into a goal-scoring stride after his operation for a slipped disc. The 31-year-old Bayern centre forward was, remarkably, back in league action just 68 days after his operation. And in the first minute of that return he hit Bayern's opening goal in a win over Kaiserslautern. Keen to overhaul Koln's Dieter Muller in the scoring charts, he then fired four against Rot-Weiss Essen.

MICHEL PLATINI is much in demand. The 22-year-old French star seems unlikely to stay with Nancy. Real Madrid are interested, so are Paris Saint-Germain, at last establishing an identity and hoping to make the UEFA Cup or Cup-winners' Cup next season. Favourites, however, are Saint-Etienne — because they can offer Nancy the best deal in players for part-exchange.

OSWALDO BRANDAO didn't have to wait long, after quitting as Brazil's manager, to find a new job. He's been taken on by Corinthians of Sao Paulo, runners-up in the last Brazilian championship and whose star, of course, remains the temperamental Roberto Rivelino.

Austria to qualify?

AUSTRIA became favourites to qualify for their first World Cup Finals appearance for 20 years after beating Turkey 1-0 before a rare 70,000 in Vienna's Prater stadium.

The Austrians owed this group three victory to a 43rd-minute goal from Walter Schachner, which was scant reward for the amount of attacking they did.

Helmut Senekowitsch has had problems from both the FA hierarchy and his players since taking over almost a year ago, but this result may help him feel it's all worthwhile.

The Turks could afford to keep only two men in attack though one of those, spearhead Ali Kemal, caused several problems. Austria's best players were midfielder Josef Hickersberger and striker Hans Krankl.

There were 15,000 Turkish fans — mainly from West Germany — in the crowd.

Austria last qualified for the World Cup Finals in 1958, when they were in the same group as England, Brazil and Russia! They decided not to enter the next competition on the grounds that their team wasn't good enough, but in fact, by the time 1962 came around they had one of the most effective teams in Europe.

Since then, and despite the promise of that 3-2 Wembley win, they have failed to get past the qualifiers in 1966, 1970 and 1974. Last time they were narrowly foiled for a place in the finals by Sweden — in a play-off.

The Austrians have a distinct advantage now over East Germany, since the only team in 1974 to beat prospective champions West Germany have been held at home by Turkey.

AUSTRIA - Koncilia - R. Sara, Persidis, Pezzey, Breitenberger - Hattenberger, Hickersberger, Prohaska - Storing, Krankl, Schachner.
TURKER - Senol - Fatih, Turgay, Erol, Necati - Alpaslan, Engin, Niko, K. Mehmet (Hussein) - Ali Kemal, Cemil.

AITOR AGUIREE, Santander'a top-scoring Argentian, figured in a remarkable turnabout against Valencia. After 77 minutes Aitor, upset because he was having no luck and the crowd were getting at him, walked from the pitch.

After a short conversation with coach Jose Maria Maguregui, he returned to the action and six minutes later shot the goal which brought Santander into the game at 1-2. He spoilt the effect however by a gesture to the crowd, who jeered him all the more instead of applauding.

Three minutes later Aitor hit the equaliser. This time there was silence.

Santander have other problems too. They are struggling to evade relegation and have debts of £240,000.

MILORAD PAVIC, former Red Star, Standard Liege, Bilbao and Benfica boss, has been sacked as manager of bottom club, Malaga.

Pavic brought Malaga up last season but after a run of 14 defeats, the last one 1-0 to Valencia, Pavic was dismissed by new president Dominguez Morno, who had taken over only a week before. Pavic's assistant Jose Luis Fuentes takes over as caretaker, while Pavic continues in temporary employment with the club as a scout.

Schachner (left) of Austria shakes hands with Turgay or Turkey after their match in Vienna.

France recover

FRANCE showed that they have recovered from the surprise of their World Cup defeat in Dublin when they beat Switzerland 4-0 in a friendly in Geneva.

Michel Platini belted in yet another free kick for the first goal after 31 minutes, but though the Swiss rarely threatened, it wasn't until they started to run out of steam late in the game that France made sure of victory.

Didier Six scored in the 73rd minute, Dominique Rocheteau in the 87th, and Olivier Rouyer with virtually the last kick.

One minor consolation for the Swiss: The same day their B team beat Luxembourg 3-0.

Meanwhile POLAND'S World Cup preparations continued unsteadily as they held the Republic of Ireland 0-0 in Dublin. Ray Treacy and Henryk Wieczorek were booked by the over-lenient referee, Bob Matthewson.

Schachner (white shirt) scores Austria's goal against Turkey in Vienna.

RUSSIA CROSS FIRST BRIDGE

RUSSIA are well-placed now to reach Argentina — on two counts. The most important is the fact that Chile failed to reach the second round of the South American qualifiers.

If that sounds like nonsense, think again. If Chile had gone through in South America they might well have finished third in the second round and needed a play-off against the winners of European group nine for a place in the finals.

If, as is likely, the winners of European group nine are Russia, we would have faced another stalemate over whether the Santiago national stadium is a football stadium or a concentration camp.

At any rate, with that hurdle disposed of, Russia went ahead to underline their good Argentina chances with a 2-0 win in Moscow over Greece.

Anatoly Konkov scored the first after 25 minutes, and made the second 12 minutes from time for David Kipiani. The Greeks had only one chance throughout, but Aleksander Astapovsky saved well from Dehkaris.

The Russian victory margin could have been greater, had skipper Oleg Blokhin and Kiev team-mate Leonid Buryak not had an off day.

RUSSIA - Astapovsky - Konkov, Khinchesashvili, Lovchev, Olshansky - Minaev, Troshkin, Buryak, Kipiani - Fyedorov, Blokhin.

GREECE - Konstantinu - Kinastas, Firos, Yosifidis, Kapsis - Terzanides, Ardizoglou, Sarapis, Delikaris - Kudas, Galakos.

YUGOSLAVIA were the real winners after Rumania's 1-0 group eight victory over Spain in Bucharest. The Yugoslavs have a little time now in which to try to solve their many team problems, whereas a win for Spain would have put a great deal of pressure on Ivan Toplak, their manager.

No wonder Toplak was smiling broadly as he came away from the Steaua stadium, where the game had to be played following earthquake damage to the main Bucharest stadium.

The only goal was a Spanish fiasco. Jose Luis Capon let a Zamfir cross slide under his boot, and Gregorio Benito belted the clearance against Pirri, from whom it rebounded into goal.

Just six minutes had gone.

Ignacio Churruca and Eugenio Leal later wasted good chances as Spain forced their way into the game — Churruca's miss on the half-hour, when he had only the goalkeeper to beat, being the worst.

Ruben Cano, Ladislao Kubala's controversial choice at centre-forward — he was born in Argentina — had a quiet time in his first international.

RUMANIA - Christian - Cheran, Satmareanu, Sames (Grigore), Vigu - Dumitru, Boloni, Iordanescu - Crisan, Georgescu, Zamfir.

SPAIN - Miguel Angel - Capon, Benito, Pirri, Camacho - Leal, Villar, Asensi - Juanito, Ruben Cano, Churruca.

World Cup details pages 48/49

Names in the news

GIANCARLO ANTOGNONI is not for sale — at any price. That was Fiorentina's reply after Juventus president Giampiero Boniperti made a tentative inquiry about the 21-year-old new Golden Boy of Italian soccer. Ironically, Boniperti made his inquiry after a game in which Antognoni, suspended, had to miss — Juve's 3-1 win in Florence.

VIKTOR KOLOTOV, skipper and schemer-in-chief of Dynamo Kiev, must be cursing the all-year-round demands made on his club. It was to help national coach Nikita Simonian that he, and several Kiev colleagues, were taken on Russia's close-season training tour in Czechoslovakia and Italy. Kolotov could have done without it. He returned to Kiev with a knee injury and was sadly missed in the Champions' Cup semi-final against Borussia Moenchengladbach.

LUIS VINICIO is one man whose name should not be featuring any longer in the Italian summer guessing game of which coach goes where. He's just signed for a further 12 months with Lazio of Rome.

JAN ZWARTKRUIS was officially supposed to have returned to his duties with the Dutch air force on April 1. Instead he continues as national team manager while the KNVB try to gain him an extra year's grace to lead the raid on Argentina.

SEPP HERBERGER, the great West German manager who so shrewdly plotted the downfall of Hungary in the 1954 World Cup, has just celebrated his 80th birthday. One man bitterly upset at not being able to make the party was the 1954 goalkeeper, Toni Turek, who has been seriously ill.

MILOS MILUTINOVIC, crack Yugoslav centre forward in the late 1950s who later played in France for Racing and Stade Francais, is now on the official FA payroll back in Yugoslavia. Milutinovic has been given the job of studying World Cup opponents Rumania in preparation for the forthcoming ties.

TWO players set to return home to Argentina: Carlos Babington, who joined West German minnows Wattenscheid after the 1974 World Cup is set to rejoin Huracan; and goalkeeper Pepe Santoro, now with Hercules of Alicante, has told the club his business interests back home need his closer attention.

PAUL GARDNER reports from

The Cosmos-
in search of

THE QUESTION is this: can you, by spending money willy-nilly, buy a winning team? We have, in New York, a case in point. A team that has spent millions of dollars in the past two years to assemble a group of super-stars. They have yet to win the championship. At the time of writing their record is won 2, lost 8 and they are in last place in the league. There is talk of disagreement among the players and the coach has shaved off his moustache to try and change the luck.

I am not, as it happens, talking of the Cosmos. The team in question is the baseball New York Yankees, but they do provide a convenient showcase of the dangers of trying to chequebook your way to a title.

For there are also rumours of disagreements among the Cosmos selection of stars. Rumours that Chinaglia is not speaking to Pelé, that he is chafing at having to take second place to Pelé in the publicity stakes. Rumours that Pelé is unhappy with the team: "Pelé would be glad if the season finished tomorrow," said a close friend of his, and certainly he is not playing well.

Rumours that coach Gordon Bradley is under pressure from the front office to play their off-season signing, goalkeeper Erol Yasin, instead of the American Shep Messing (the front office includes Chairman Nesuhi Ertegun and Vice-President Ahmet Ertegun, both Turkish; Yasin is also Turkish).

Plus the usual disciplinary dilemmas that superstars always bring with them. Two of the Cosmos American players, fined $100 each for breaking curfew, simply refused to pay on the grounds that the team's stars were frequently late for practice but were never fined. The fines were rescinded.

What on earth, one might ask, will be the effect on all this, of the arrival of yet another superstar, Franz Beckenbauer, a man with a substantial regard for his own worth and a formidable record of getting his own way?

On the bright side, there is at least one area where the advent of the forceful Franz may resolve what has been a festering problem for the Cosmos ever since the club was first formed. The question of what style of soccer the team should play.

When the Cosmos were formed in 1971 they recruited an assortment of average players of different nationalities who, while they exhibited different styles, were all playing at approximately the same level of competence. It was not a stunningly high level, but it was good enough to win the NASL Championship in 1972.

Looking back to those far off days (can it really be only five years distant?) I find it difficult to recall names, for there were no stars. The Cosmos were a mediocre team, but they were a team.

Being an average team, however, is not good enough for New York. It is part of the lore of American professional sports, all of them, that to succeed a league *must* have a strong team in New York. There is so much going on in the big city that you have to be exceptional even to be noticed, but — once you are noticed — you will get more attention than the rest of the league put together. New York is still the media capital of the USA.

Clive Toye, the Cosmos President, has always been acutely aware of the need to do the dramatic thing in New York. Even in 1972 there were signs of the Toye style. Two big names were signed by the Cosmos: Cinesinho, the Brazilian who had been playing in Italy, arrived, played one undistinguished game in pouring rain on soaking-wet artificial turf, and then disappeared without trace, apparently back to Brazil. The other name was Helenio Herrera — not the HH, but HH Jr., his son, who was signed from Real Madrid as a player. A nice, intelligent, amiable young man with only one drawback — he couldn't really play. He was back in Spain before you could say *catenaccio*.

While the search for big names was going on, the Cosmos were also searching for an identity. Were they an English-style team? Were they more continental? Could they possibly be sort of Latin? A lot of the indecision was the result of attempts to satisfy the various ethnic groups of fans in the New York area.

By any standards, 1974 was the Cosmos' worst year. The team was in an English phase, with a number of not very good imports from the Football League. The soccer was dreadful, and at the end of the season the Cosmos had won only six out of 20 games and had finished dead last in their division.

So the Cosmos underwent another personality change. The four English imports did not return for 1975. In their place were five wonderfully-talented (we were told) Uruguayans. The Cosmos had gone Latin, and we were asked to watch the "Cosmos Come Alive in '75". Eventually, they did — but in a way that owed nothing to the Uruguayans.

It was Clive Toye's quest for the big name that revivified the Cosmos. At the beginning of the year there was the attempt to sign George Best, which came to a screeching halt when the Cosmos made a pre-arranged telephone call to him in London to settle the final details of the contract. Mr Best was not available, he was in Spain. End of negotiations.

Then, half way through the season, came Pelé. At that point, the fact that the Cosmos already had a nucleus of South American players looked like a canny piece of planning, as though a team had been prepared for the insertion of Pelé. Whatever, the outcome was disappointing. While Pelé drew record crowds and media attention, the Cosmos struggled on the field. They were not winning, and Pelé was clearly not at home with his new team-mates.

By the end of the season the Cosmos had failed to make the play-offs, and Pelé was not playing, out of the team with an injury. The final humiliation came with a 5-1 loss, on national television, to a very ordinary Boston team. By now the Uruguayans were in disgrace — "They don't give a shit about the Cosmos", remarked one of the team's American players, "they're just interested in getting the season over and getting back home."

Back home they went, and with them went the concept of the Cosmos as a team in the South American mould. The decision was made by the Cosmos brass to return to what they felt most happy with — English players. The melancholy British-style team of 1974 was forgotten with the reasoning that more money was now available, and therefore better British players could be obtained.

One further change was thought necessary to expunge the past: Gordon Bradley, the Englishman who had coached the Cosmos since their formation in 1971, was kicked upstairs to become a Vice President of the club. He was replaced by another Englishman, Ken Furphy. It looked, at the time, a curious appointment. In retrospect, it takes on the air of a monumental mistake.

For this, surely, was the crucial moment when the Cosmos, having spent a fortune acquiring Pelé, needed to build a team that would complement him, that would allow him to show-off all his skills. He needed alongside him, if not world-class players, at least players who understood his style. Ideally, good Brazilian players.

Instead, we got Furphy, a man of unrelenting Englishness, who arrived

New York

-a team
a style

with yet another batch of four very English-style players who were to be the nucleus of the 1976 team. It has to be admitted here that Pele did not exactly help his own cause by recommending, during the dark days at the end of the 1975 season, a Brazilian defender named De.

Rushed onto a plane from Brazil, De was flown to Toronto where he played with the Cosmos within hours of his arrival. He looked slow, tired and apathethic. If he was suffering from fatigue as a result of the plane journey, it was a fatigue that was to persist for all three of the unspectacular weeks that he spent with the Cosmos. He departed leaving behind a feeling among Cosmos officials that Pele's judgment of players was suspect.

Two South Americans were signed for 1976; Ramon Mifflin, the Peruvian international who was to prove something of a problem throughout the season, and Nelsi Morais a young midfielder from Santos who broke his leg in a pre-season game and played very little after that.

Furphy forged ahead with his English style. Mifflin sat on the bench as often as not, Pele played in midfield, the team did not win and the fans booed. Exit Furphy after only four months as coach.

The new coach was none other than the old coach, Gordon Bradley. He re-instated Mifflin, moved Pele forward, but still the Cosmos failed to win even their own division, let alone the championship. The arrival of another superstar, in the shape of Long John Chinaglia, added to Pele and Mifflin, gave the Cosmos a superb attacking trio, yet only in occasional games did things click properly.

The team now had a split personality. One part of it was the Latin-tempo of Pele, Mifflin, Nelsi Morais and Chinaglia, the other was the largely English-style back four and midfield. The two parts, if not incompatible, were clearly ill at ease with each other.

This split into English and non-English (or even anti-English) factions persists this season. Pele, in his final year, must now be aware, if he was not before, that he will not be getting the players around him that he wants. His recommendations — Clodoaldo and Edu of Santos — have not been signed. Another of his choices, Rildo, a full back who was a regular member of the Brazil side in the late 1960s, has been hanging around the Cosmos training sessions, getting games with the reserve team. He, too, will not be signed. The Cosmos feel — incredibly, I think — that they already have better full backs . . .

Franz Beckenbauer.

The realisation that he cannot get the players he wants may well account for Pele's poor form so far this season. In his first two games he came close to Orwell's description of Stanley Baldwin, "a hole in the air", though he hardly merited the verdict of a top Cosmos official — "the worst player on the field."

And if he were the worst player on the field, what could the Cosmos do about it? It is inconceivable that Pele would be dropped from the team. The last coach who tried that was Joao Saldanha in 1970; the upshot of his effrontery was that Saldanha lost his job, Pele played, and Brazil went on to win the World Cup. (Something that reminds me of poor Guillermo Velazquez, the Colombian referee who sent Pele off the field in the first five minutes of an exhibition game against Millionarios in Bogota; when the furore had died down, Pele was back on the field, a linesman was the new referee, and Senor Velazquez was watching from the tunnel entrance.)

In American terms, Pele is too valuable in a public relations sense. Whenever the Cosmos play an away game this season, all the local publicity is based on the theme "Your last chance to see a legend in action." Anyway, how can you bench a player to whom you are giving a massive season's-end retirement game?

On top of all that, the Cosmos clearly need Pele's skills if they are to win the championship. The question mark over the Cosmos season so far is whether Pele is ineffective because he is unhappy, or whether he is washed up. For my part, I cannot believe the latter. If I am right, then the task for the Cosmos is now to give Pele a team that will leave the world with the image of Pele as still the greatest of all players, not as a lethargic misfit in his own team. And how could such a team fail to win the championship?

What is needed is a change in the essentially English-style nucleus — or to be more specific, the back four — of the current team.

World Cup progress in South America

Uruguay's exit was swift and a surprise

Report by ERIC WEIL

"May I have the pleasure," Newell's Old Boys number five Gallego seems to be saying to Rosario Central's Rogel as the ball escapes them both in this Rosario derby last season. Argentina fans are hoping for a little less dancing around and more soccer in this season's championship which will be the longest on record.

URUGUAY'S exit from the World Cup was as swift as it was surprising. In spite of their poor international record over the past year (already mentioned in WORLD SOCCER), it was expected that they would get past Bolivia and Venezuela. The 1-1 draw in Venezuela, reported last month, practically sealed their fate in the very first game however.

In the next match Uruguay lost 1-0 to Bolivia in La Paz — not an entirely unexpected result as it is always difficult for visiting teams to win in the 3,700m altitude — and it was probably Uruguay's best performance in an even match. Uruguay had started off on the defensive to save energy in the altitude and play for a point which would have left them with a chance, but when Jimenez scored Bolivia's goal just after halftime, Uruguay attacked more in search of the equaliser.

All Bolivia now needed was to beat Venezuela in the next two matches to enter the South American final round. They won 3-1 in Caracas and the fact that only 5,000 watched the match and the previous against Uruguay there was not due to lack of interest, but because the stadium just would not hold more. Venezuela gave quite a good account of themselves.

After Bolivia took a 1-0 half-time lead through Saucedo and there had been a lot of midfield play with hardly any work for the goalkeepers. Venezuela went all out in the second half and had their chances. But just as Venezuela were well on top, Jiminez put Bolivia two up in a counter-attack and Aguilar scored a third five minutes later as Venezuela faded. Iriarte netted Venezuela's consolation goal five minutes from the end, but there was no indication that they would stop Bolivia from qualifying in the return match.

Uruguay's coach, Juan Hohberg (strongly criticised in defeat by a press and angry fans who just could not conceive that Uruguay's once famous soccer had fallen so low) resigned the next day. Bolivia duly qualified a week later with a 2-0 victory over Venezuela in La Paz. Venezuela were on the defensive from the start and Bolivia scored through Jiminez and Arugones. But the expected goal rush never came. Bolivia slowed down in the second half without losing control of the match and that was that.

Bolivia's players and coaching staff each received a 3,000 dollar bonus from the Bolivian FA and a public appeal, organised by the press, raised another 2,500 dollars for each man — making a total bonus never before paid in this country.

Uruguay's remaining home games were merely academic. Uruguay beat Venezuela 2-0 with a goal in each half from Pizzani. Venezuela were no mean rivals in a poor encounter — their four matches showed that Venezuelan soccer is on the upgrade — and the small attendance of barely 3,000 at Montevideo's Centenario stadium came mainly to whistle at the Uruguayan players. And there were only 2,000 for the last game which ended in a 2-2 draw with Bolivia who thus finished not only with a comfortable three-point lead in their group, but also unbeaten.

Uruguay failed to make the World Cup finals for only the second time in the competition's history. In 1958 Paraguay eliminated them.

Bertoni, in the rear, scores Argentina's first goal in their 5-1 victory over Hungary in Buenos Aires.

BRAZIL QUALIFY

BRAZIL started off the South American group one elimination series with Osvaldo Brandao as coach under whom they had won 19, drawn two and lost only one of 22 matches since the middle of 1975 (when he took over) and they finished under Rio club Flamengo's coach Claudio Coutinho who had been in charge of Brazil's Olympic team which was fourth in Montreal last year . . . but general opinion is that the change of coach made no difference to Brazil's final victory, even if it was a close thing.

Brazil did play too defensively in their opening 0-0 draw in Colombia and Brandao was strongly criticised for this, because it was thought that more adventurous tactics would probably have earned them both points. Brazil lined up a four-man half-line, played slow and virtually without wingers. Colombia defended at first, but speeded up in the second half when they might have won, although Brazil were the only team to get the ball in the net when Waldomiro scored eight minutes from the end and hotly protested when Argentine referee Miguel Comesaña anulled it as a result of a linesman signalling offside. Brazil also missed dangerous attacking back Marinho whom Brandao left out.

When Paraguay beat Colombia 1-0 in Bogota's same El Campin stadium four days later, it was "panic stations" in Brazil as possible World Cup elimination for the former triple champions seemed in sight. Paraguay had scored through Jara Saguir — one of several repatriated players with clubs abroad — halfway through the first half and their strong defence stood up well against Colombia's continual attacks later.

In Rio, meanwhile, Brandao resigned "because of the continual criticism from all sides" and his resignation was immediately accepted by the Brazilian Sports Confederation's president Admiral Heleno Nunes who only a few days earlier had talked of extending Brandao's contract from April to after the World Cup. It was said that pressure to get rid of Brandao had come mainly from the strong Rio de Janeiro clubs several of whose leading players — Paulo Cesar, Carlos Alberto Pintinho and 1974 World Cup captain Carlos Alberto Torres among them — had been left out of the national team. But it was also rumoured that Brandao's son had been threatened with death after the game against Colombia if his father did not resign.

Coutinho immediately made a few team changes, bringing back the above mentioned three players, but Brazil's chances improved before he even took his team on the field as a result of Paraguay only being able to draw 1-1 at home against Colombia — and that only with virtually the last shot of the game when Jara Saguir again came to the rescue. Paraguay had been pressing for most of the match, but Colombia showed superior tactics in a poor game.

In the next match Brazil easily beat Colombia 6-0 in Rio in the only uneven group one match and they would have won under any or without a coach. Roberto (the group's leading scorer with three) and Marinho netted two each. But then came the vital game against Paraguay which showed how close it really was.

Brazil virtually assured themselves of qualifying for the South American final round with a 1-0 win in Asunción, but they hardly played well. Paraguay made it easier for them by not marking attacking back Marinho and then deflecting the ball into their own net (Insfran) from Paulo Cesar's long shot 14 minutes after halftime. The scorer, half Rivelino and back Luiz Pereira (who had come back from Atletico Madrid to play) were Brazil's outstanding players.

Brazil got the point they needed in the return match at Rio de Janeiro, but again things were made easier for them when Roberto gave them a five-minute lead from a penalty and then, after Baez equalised 10 minutes after halftime and Paraguay started worrying the Brazilian defence, a comeback was cut short by the sending off of Baez for a foul six minutes later and team mate Colman, for holding up play eight minutes from the end. Goalkeeper Jose Benitez kept Paraguay in the game after outstanding performances in previous games also and Brazilian champions Internacional de Porto Alegre immediately beat Flamengo (Rio) to it and signed the Olimpia Asunción for 200,000 dollars.

There was not much to choose between the two countries and Brazil did not play as they were expected to do in accordance with the quality of their players, even under new coach Coutinho. There was more confidence under Coutinho, some players said, but they were mostly the ones who had been left out of Brandao's team.

Group 3 results . . . pages 48/49

BAYERN —END OF AN ERA

by Arthur Rotmil

Meanwhile West Germany mourns the end of an era — Bayern Munich three times in succession European Cup Winners, were eliminated in the quarter-finals by Russian champions, Dynamo Kiev.

It is no use pointing to the absence of the injured Gerd Müller and Bernd Dürnberger, or to the total loss of form by the not full fit Uli Hoeness (he has just had a hernia operation), or the lack of adeequate replacements. The Russians too, were handicapped, for their season had not even began and the four-month winter break seemed an insurmountable obstacle.

In Kiev a brilliant Sepp Maier even saved a penalty in the second leg, but two late goals (another penalty!) in the 83rd and 88th minutes put paid to Bayern's glorious reign in Europe. There is little doubt that the Munich club will soon be in even more serious trouble. They must qualify at least for the UEFA-Cup next season, as only international competitions can help to keep the club solvent. Their wages bill alone is far in excess of what they can earn at the gate in the *Bundesliga*.

It is true that they had made a net profit of £100,000 for last year, but that came of course mainly from European Cup games and from fees from lucrative friendlies abroad, which they could command as European champions.

This income will not be quite so substantial next year. Yet, Bayern need every pfennig now, not least to keep their six amateur sections of the club going. These comprise apart from football (that includes ladies teams, as well as the amateur, youth and juniors) also other sports branches, like Handball, Table Tennis, Basketball and Gymnastics, who all "live" from the footballing pros.

The champions Borussia Mönchengladbach, on the other hand, have scraped through to the European Cup semi-finals and were facing Bayern's conquerors Dynamo Kiev. The Gladbacher did well to beat Belgium's FC Bruges, having only drawn 2-2 at home, but a marvellously timed goals by substitute Wilfried Hannes (19), just seven minutes from the end saw them through.

In the *Bundesliga* the title holders regained the leadership which they lost briefly to Eintracht Brunswick. The return of their top scorer Jupp Heynckes, after a four-month injury lay off, was the most important factor in the improved form of Borussia. And now the club signed yet another Dane — Gert Jörgensen (20) from Nyköbing, Denmark's leading scorer last season with 15 goals. The management hopes that he will follow his other compatriots, who made their name in the ranks of West Germany's most popular club.

Burgnich to retire

TARCISIO BURGNICH will retire at the end of the season after a career bringing virtually every honour in the game.

Burgnich has played only sparingly for Napoli this season, but his latest recall was for a game where his experience would prove ideal — in the away leg of the Cup-winners' Cup quarter final with Slask Wroclaw.

Napoli took a 0-0 draw and made a double killing in the return — winning 2-0 to go into the last four, and drawing £190,000 receipts from an 80,000 gate.

Burgnich was outstanding in Poland — almost 20 years after he first played in *Serie A*.

That was in 1958-59, when he was a young right back and played once for Udinese. The next year he played seven times then moved to Juventus. But Juve had a surfeit of experienced defenders and after Burgnich played 13 games he was shuffled on yet again — this time to Palermo.

For the first time he became a first-team regular and at the start of the 1962-63 season was signed by Helenio Herrera for the first of 12 seasons with Inter. With Burgnich a fixture at right back Inter took the championship four times, and the Champions' Cup and world club cup twice each.

In 1974, at 34, he was no longer so settled. Disagreements with officials led to Burgnich being released to Napoli — where he took a new lease of life.

This season however he played in barely a dozen games before coach Bruno Pesaola preferred the younger Antonio La Palma, then Luigi Pogliana. Burgnich accepted that his playing career was at an end and continued training without rancour.

"It's obvious that Napoli must find new players, that I couldn't go on for ever," he said.

Napoli still draw their extraordinary crowds and the team have responded by reaching third place in the table. Not that everything is sweetness and light. Past president Achille Lauro and present incumbent Corrado Ferlaino are both being pursued by the income tax authorities!

CHINAGLIA BACK IN ROME

GIORGIO CHINAGLIA has been back in Rome with two tasks: the first to play for New York Cosmos against his old club, Lazio, the second to sort out some Italians to play Stateside this summer.

Despite the cloud under which he left more than a year ago, Chinaglia still has his fans.

"They haven't been the same since you left," one man called to him as Chinaglia walked through the arrivals lounge at Fiumicino.

"This will be the first time I've played against Lazio," he said. "It's a bit embarrassing really. I suppose I've got to be ready for the fans to whistle and jeer me from start to finish.

"But we haven't come particularly determined to win — we just want to sort out our team. Pele is in Brazil until the middle of April, but we've got to get used to playing without him, because he retires in the autumn."

Perhaps Lazio had their minds on the derby with Roma to be played in the same Studio Olimpico the next Sunday. Anyway, not only did Cosmos win 2-1, but Chinaglia smacked in their first goal after 12 minutes.

But he wouldn't be drawn into a forecast for the derby.

"Lazio are a different team now to when I played here," he said. "The players are different, the tactics have changed. The funny thing is, that I never made any secret of the fact that I would have liked Franco Cordova playing alongside me. Now he's here, but I've left."

Nothing went right for Lazio on Sunday either. Despite hitting the post twice and dominating for 80 of the 90 minutes, they lost 1-0, even though Roma had striker Giuliano Musiello sent off just after half-time for retaliation.

The only goal was scored by Bruno Conti, after Pierino Prati headed on a Loris Boni free kick. It was Prati's second celebration of the month — a few weeks before he had scored his 100th goal in *Serie A*.

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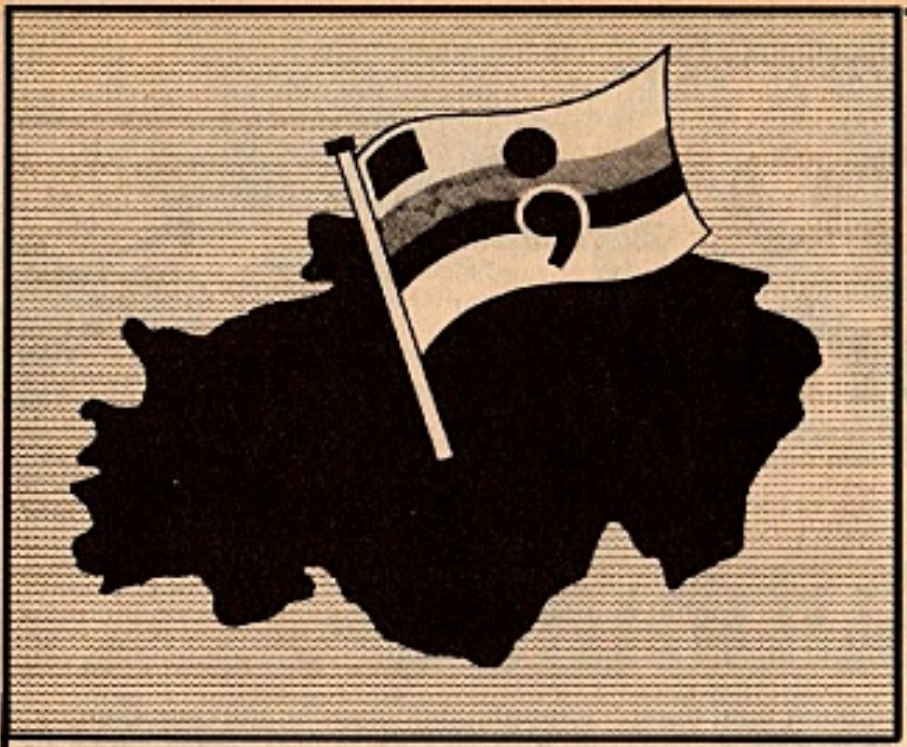

A very specia

CONS from

Since "The Guardian's" April Fool's Day Supplement introduced the island of San Seriffe to the unsuspecting public, the focus of interest has been riveted on this tiny Republic. Briefly, for the uninitiated, San Seriffe is situated somewhere West of Watford in the middle of the Indian Ocean, and is shaped like a semi-colon.

Run by a military, benevolent despot, who gained power bloodlessly by winning the toss, it is a true democracy, where a small section of the community takes part in "decision making", and the rest accepts these decisions without much complaint apart from the occasional bombings, revolutions, kidnappings and assassinations.

In fact, it is an ideal place to stage a World Cup Final tournament, and the only reason FIFA haven't selected them for this honour before is that they were not aware of the island's existence. Football is by far the most popular sport there, and when I heard that their F.A. President, Chief Secretary and Treasurer was in London (yes, it is just one man, who happens to be the brother-in-law of the Head of State) I went to see him for a little chat. (English is the second language of San Seriffe, and the vast majority of the population speak it fluently. It is with their first language that they have some difficulties).

Senor Constant Coma was resting for a few days in the "Barbara Castle" ward of a private sanatorium, recovering slowly from watching three consecutive Aston Villa v Everton League Cup Finals. I knew that the island had a thriving football industry, meaning that the players were extremely well paid, and that the clubs are on the verge of bankruptcy. One of their internationals nearly had a nervous breakdown recently, because he had to spend a few weeks in a luxury hotel while his new mansion was being redecorated.

"Senor", I said, immediately impressing upon him my cosmopolitan background, "welcome to the home of football. We gave this great game to the world, and as far as the distressed population of Derby, Norwich, Manchester and several other backward townships are concerned, they can keep it. Tell me, how is soccer organized in San Seriffe?"

"It is", he answered with a slight trace of an Oxford accent "run by two bodies of contrasting interests. The F.A. (me and my half-sister) and the Footballs Liga (a motley of northern vagrants and millionaires). We look after the interests of all the players, the liga are only concerned with the creme de la creme.

"The latest argument concerns the preparation of the national team before important games against one of the surrounding unfriendly islands. Our team manager insists that the squad should meet at least six months before the game. He wants them to move into a "retiro", where they can play gin-rummy together, and watch Mr. Kojak on television.

"In their spare time, they could study a six volumes' dossier on the opposition. Similar preparations before recent games were so successful that we only lost 2-0 on both occasions. But the selfish clubs would not co-operate, and they insist that all league matches should be played-off as scheduled. According to their Secretary, international football is of secondary importance because of the presence of too many foreigners. They want the squad to gather a couple of hours before each game, kitted out with identity cards so that they can recognize each other, which would encourage them to play their natural game".

"What *is* your natural game?"

"We play an individual brand of football. The object of the exercise is to give the ball away as quickly as possible. That is usually achieved by poor control and inaccurate passing. If that doesn't work, we sling high balls into the

LESLIE VERNON interview

STANT COMA San Seriffe

opposing penalty area, either straight into the arms of the goalkeeper, or just too far forward out of reach of our strikers. It doesn't really matter, you see, because the other San Seriffe team play exactly the same game, so we get the ball back pretty quickly. But this is the type of football our crowds like, they wouldn't stand or sit for anything else".

"How do you know?" "Well, they are told that our league is the strongest, cleanest, best balanced in the world. Since they have never seen a league match anywhere else, they accept this statement as gospel. Our T.V. only shows foreign teams when they play against us, and then the names of their players are hardly ever mentioned.

"In newspaper previews, the opposition is ignored. We tend to concentrate on our own squad. A few weeks ago, the current European Champions played against one of the smaller islands under our protectorate. None of their players were mentioned in the papers, because the journalists thought that the introduction of an ex-milkman into the home side's forward line was a better 'story'.

"The Press also helps to perpetuate the idea that football is an excellent substitute for war. Match reports talk about courage, stamina, battles, clashes, soaking-up enemy pressure, etc. Skill and artistry are frowned upon, unless they are instantly and visibly effective. We play a machine-made, mass-produced, functional game in tune with the computerized nature of our society."

"On what principles does your national manager pick his teams?" "He read somewhere that the more internationals a team have, the higher their rating is. Shrewd man as he is, he realized that our league would be immensely powerful if every player was an international.

So, he picks eleven new players for every game, which doesn't do much for teamwork, but now we are in the position of being able to export a boatload of capped players without making our national side any worse or better".

"How do your coaches train the players?" "Every single one of our club managers are in favour of open, attacking, entertaining football. They love and encourage individuality, flair and skill. But these principles only apply to five-a-sides in the car-park. In competitive games, they have to be realistic and plan more defensive tactics.

"You see, their livelihood depends on the results, and they cannot afford to risk upsetting their Board of Directors, who are made up of property speculators, snooker hall owners and university lecturers. The Directors appoint the managers, and if he loses a few matches, they openly declare their corporate faith in him. A couple of days later, they sack him or ask him to resign."

"Have you got good referees?" "The best in the world! They are as fit as the players, and they have a deep understanding of the game. If the players maim each other or indulge in a little friendly punch-up, our refs take into consideration the emotional nature of our San Seriffians, and after a friendly chat, the injured players are taken away on stretchers.

"But if a player kicks the ball away or doesn't call the ref "Sir" as it's ordered in our "code of conduct" charter, he is sent-off at once. Referees' sexual habits, parentage, ability to put their contact lenses in properly, must not be questioned by the players. Discipline at all cost — but we must remember that it is a man's game (or woman's in some cases), and these young people ought to be able to look after themselves.

"That's why, towards the end of season, most of our teams field their reserve sides. Members of the first eleven are either hospitalized or walking on crutches."

"Are you optimistic about the future?" "Most certainly — as one of your great football statesmen used to say: If Nicaragua beat our greatest group rivals 6-0 in their next match, and if we also thrash them 1-0, we might qualify for the next World Cup. But if we don't, we shall organize several working parties to tour the globe, and find out what is new. Their recommendations will be carefully studied for three years, and then it will be discussed on T.V. by a specially selected panel of ex-players, managers and a comedian."

I wished all the luck in the world to this likeable character, and walked out of the hospital happy in the knowledge that the state of football is much healthier in England. I do hope we shall draw San Seriffe in the next European Championship. Then we might even get in the last eight!

P.S. Johan Cruyff has agreed to move to San Seriffe after his contract with Barcelona expires. He will get half the entire income of the island for a two-years' stay. His father-in-law will be elected Prime Minister, and Cruyff will have the right to overrule the referees' decisions. He will carry yellow and red cards during matches, and can caution or send-off anyone — including the ref.

REAL celebrate

JOAO HAVELANGE was there in the Estadio Bernabeu to present the trophy — a silver galleon — to the winning captain, but the 75th anniversary tournament of Real Madrid hardly lived up to expectations.

And that was NOT the fault of the two minor contestants, Iran, representing Asia, and African club champions Mouloudia Chaabia of Algeria, representing that continent.

Rather the big disappointments came from the below-par performances of Madrid themselves — even though they took top prize — and the big attractions, Argentina.

The Argentinians opened the tournament against Iran with a virtually full-strength side. Yet it was Iran, the Asian champions, who impressed the most. They won more corners — nine to seven — against the Argentinians who barely bothered to find excuses in their transatlantic trip or the cold.

As midfielder Riccardo Villa said: "Iran were just better than us. We were too confident and they surprised us, and could have won."

Instead the match went to penalties, and here the Argentinians' experience paid off, as they won the spot kick contest 4-1 after the 1-1 draw.

Daniel Bertoni scored for Argentina from a clear early penalty, with Sadiki heading the equaliser 12 minutes from the end of normal time.

Madrid had trouble too, before they beat Mouloudia 2-1. The midfield trio of Breitner, Velazquez and Vitoria hardly functioned and Henning Jensen was an anonymous centre forward in the first half.

Echoes of Argentina afterwards as the Madrid players praised the Algerians, but the African champions paid dearly for their efforts.

In the third place match they were nowhere near as good, and though Iran weren't so bright either, the Middle East side with whom Frank O'Farrell did such good work between 1974 and 1976, won 5-3 on penalties after another 1-1 draw.

The final was played before a mere 12,000 fans, who had to wait until eight minutes from time for the first real opening, and the only goal. Pirri fired a long pass through the centre of defence and Vicente del Bosque hit a shot wide of Hugo Gatti.

But by then the Argentinians were down to 10 men, having had Oscar Ardiles sent off four minutes before for retaliation after a heavy tackle by Juan Sol.

Madrid had virtually their best team out, but as Bertoni commented "I thought Madrid would be a bit special. What a disappointment."

SEMI-FINALS

Argentina 1 (Bertoni 14 pen)
Iran 1 (Sadiki 78)
HT: 1-0. Att: 25,000. Argentina won 4-1 on penalties.
Argentina - Gatti - Olguin, Gallego, Tarantini, Carrascosa - Ardiles, Villa (Benitez 59), Killer - Houseman (Ortiz 59), Luque, Bertoni.
Iran - Behran (Sehan 42) - Nazari, Abdullah, Kazurin, Iskendarian - Pervin, Sadiki, Kaelmpur - Rochan, Kafur, Adilhani.

Real Madrid 2 (Breitner 14, Aguilar 40)
Mouloudia Chaabia 1 (Bachta 74)
HT: 2-0. Att: 25,000
Real Madrid - Miguel Angel - San Jose, Pirri, Benito, Rubinan - Breitner, Velazquez (Sanchez Barrios 78), Vitoria - Aguilar, Jensen (Santillana h-t), Macanas.
Mouloudia - Ait Mouhoub - Zemour, Mahiouz, Zenid, Azzouz (Oudina h-t) Bachi, Bachta, Ben-chikh - Betrouni, Bousri (Ait Hamouda 69), Draoui.

THIRD PLACE MATCH

Iran 1 (Kafur 54)
Mouloudia Chaabia 1 (Zenir 60)
HT: 0-0. Att: 1,000. Iran won 5-3 on penalties.
Iran - Nebany - Naziri, Kazurin, Abdullah, Endinarik - Pervin, Sadiki, Kaelmpur - Rochan, Kafur, Adilhani (Hiyskani 74).
Mouloudia - Ait Mouhoub - Zemour, Mahiouz, Zenid, Oudina - Bachi (Draoui h-t), Bachta, Ben-Chikh - Betrouni, Bousri, Hamouda (Bellemou 78).

FINAL

Real Madrid 1 (Del Bosque 82)
Argentina 0
HT: 0-0. Att: 12,000
Real Madrid - Miguel Angel - Sol, Benito, Pirri, Camacho - Breitner, Velazquez (Vitoria 14), del Bosque - Aguilar, Santillana, Macanas (Sanchez Barrios 50).
Argentina - Gatti - Tarantini, Olguin, Killer, Carrascosa - Ardiles, Gallego, Villa (Benitez 69) - Houseman (Ortiz h-t), Luque (Bravo 63), Bertoni.

Hensen of Real Madrid in action against Mouloudia Chaabia of Algeria. Real Madrid won 2-1.

MADRID
their 75th anniversary

by KEIR RADNEDGE

ALL the problems of Madrid seem gathered in the shape of Yugoslav coach Miljan Miljanic. He still has 18 months of his contract to run, but whether he will fulfil it seems open to question.

The rumours from Italy that Nils Liedholm is ready to accept a £180,000 contract to take over this summer add to the rumours about Miljanic, as does the £400,000 agreement to sell Paul Breitner back to West Germany, to Eintracht Braunschweig.

Breitner joined Madrid at Miljanic's behest for the game fee in 1974, after the World Cup Finals. Miljanic saw Breitner as a midfielder to aid Günter Netzer. But just as Breitner's Spanish career has been linked to Miljanic, so it may well prove the reverse as well.

The fact that Breitner is going could mean that the decision to part company with Miljanic has already been agreed.

Miljanic hinted as much in Italy recently, when he was instructing a group of Italian coaches at Coverciano.

Palyer unrest is growing — and there has been nothing like it since di Stefano, Gento and Co got together to oust Paraguay's Fleitas Solich towards the end of that magnificent 1959-60 season.

Manual Velazquez, the midfield general pre-Netzer, has never made any secret of the fact that he and Miljanic can't find any common ground. Now Roberto Martinez, a key forward until this term — and another Miljanic signing — is unhappy after being a reserve all season. So is goalkeeper Mariano Garcia Remon, nicknamed the Odessa Cat after a brilliant display against Dynamo Kiev in the Champions' Cup a few years back.

Action from the match between Argentina and Iran which ended 1-1.

Question

Rumours fly too about the men Madrid want to sign. Interest in Kevin Keegan has cooled since England's home defeat by Holland — but whether that was the reason, or coincided with a decision on Miljanic is an open question.

Madrid are said to have reached a tacit understanding with Espanol about the mercurial inside forward Daniel Sobona. Then there are more German names being bandied around — Stielicke of Borussia Moenchengladbach and his team-mate Rainer Bonhof.

But I understand that Madrid, from the very top downwards, have had their fill of Germans for the time being.

The run of the mill results show little sign of promise. The team looks jaded and ill at ease, though Miljanic will tell you that he's never ever known a club have a season like it for injuries.

Training

And some of the players will tell you on the quiet that this only signals the over-strenuous training methods of Srecko Radisic being found out.

Miljanic and Radisic — two years ago Madrid won the double and they were heroes. They had brought a new style and approach and method to Spanish soccer. Today Spanish soccer has decided it would rather not know.

Madrid did well to draw — away to Valencia and beat a fading Espanol 4-1 at home. There was a 2-1 win at home over Sweden in a friendly as well. But worst of all, after having been beaten 3-0 away in an early round of the Cup by Hercules, they wasted a prime opportunity to get the fans back on their side.

Some 90,000 turned out to see the great fightback — and drifted away in disgust after Madrid could only manage a 2-0 win and slid out.

SWEDEN — FOOT IN THE DOOR!

Ronnie Hellstroem, Sweden's goalkeeper who is rated one of the best in the world.

THE FIRST European country — apart from the holders West Germany — to have put its foot firmly in the door of next year's World Cup finals, is Sweden. Grouped with Switzerland and Norway the tough and durable Swedes brushed aside the challenge of both these weaker nations and having beaten Norway at home 2-0 and the Swiss away by 2-1, they have an almost conclusive grip on this relatively easy group.

Sweden may not be rated a "super power" in world football, but they have reached the World Cup finals six times, including the last two series in Mexico and West Germany. In 1970 they were pipped for a quarter-final place by Uruguay, by just one goal! In 1974 the Scandinavians reached the last eight and in their pool only the ultimate winners West Germany and Poland, who eventually finished third, proved stronger.

Sweden came third in 1950, but their best ever performance was in 1958, when the tournament was staged in their own country and they finished runners-up to the unforgettable Brazilian team. Sweden, it should be remembered, are one of six foreign countries who have beaten England at Wembley — the others are Hungary, Austria, West Germany, Italy and Holland. Sweden's 3-2 triumph in London in 1959 was an unexpected as it was deserved.

Sweden's recent successes are all the more remarkable since they are handicapped by the continual migration of their best players who seek professional careers in other European countries. Thus, the national manager never knows when and if his best side will be available. Foreign clubs are reluctant to release these highly paid stars and although nearly all of them have a clause written into their contracts, guaranteeing the national team's priority, this works for World Cup qualifying matches, but rarely for ordinary friendlies.

As a result, the national coach is hardly ever in a position to test his first choice side prior to an important World Cup tie. But the Swedish national team bosses are used to not having their top players at their disposal. Since the war their country, together with Denmark and Yugoslavia, has become the greatest source in the field of exporting footballers in Europe.

by Arthur Rotmil

The first stars to make a big impact in a foreign land, were the three inside forwards who helped Sweden to win the Olympic soccer tournament in London in 1948: Gunnar Gren, Gunnar Nordahl and Nils Liedholm, who became known as the Gre-No-Li trio. They were snapped up by wealthy Italian clubs and made their fortune; Liedholm is in fact still active there, now as a club manager.

Other famous Swedes who gained fame in Italy were the stopper Gustavsson and the wingers Kurt Hamrin and "Nacka" Skoglund, while centre forward Agne Simonsson played for a while for Real Madrid.

World Champions

He was incidentally the star of their 3-2 triumph over England. When the Swedes won second place in the 1958 World Cup, their forward line consisted of Hamrin, Gren, Simonsson, Liedholm and Skoglund. That team was worthy of becoming world champions then, but it had the misfortune of meeting in Brazil probably the greatest national side ever assembled.

In recent years, around the 1970 World Cup for example, such stars resided abroad for long spells like Bo Larsson, (mostly in West Germany), Ove Kindvall (in Holland), Ove Grahn (in Switzerland) and Kurt Axelsson (in Belgium). They were the key men of the national side, but not always able to represent their country. In the 1974 World Cup the Swedish squad of 22 included 12 players who were either engaged by, or were about to sign for, foreign clubs!

Catenaccio history

ITALY

THE HISTORY of *catenaccio*, the Italian defensive system which in one form or another permeated soccer everywhere, was told recently by Nereo Rocco, now back in charge again at Milan (where he may yet become vice-president).

Rocco has often been credited with starting it all, though its real basis must lie in the Swiss 'bolt'.

Anyway, Rocco, as he tells it, caught the idea from a soldier playing for Triestina just before the war. Rocco was playing for Padova then, and tried to interest the coach without much success.

But after the war, when Rocco himself became coach at Triestina, he put the plan into operation with remarkable results. In 1948 Triestina finished second equal on points with Juventus and Milan, albeit 16 points behind Valentino Mazzola's Torino.

A few years later, as the big clubs brought in more foreign forwards, so the small clubs switched *en masse* to *catenaccio*, as did Internazionale to win the league in 1953 and 1954.

It's interesting too that Rocco puts the Triestina success top of his memories. Next comes his first championship with Milan, in 1962, followed by the Champions' Cup victory the next year.

CESARE MALDINI, Milan's captain in 1962 and 1963, has quit as coach to second division Ternana after just three and a half months.

Ternana were left bottom of the table after a 2-0 defeat at Sambenedettese and Maldini announced his decision next day. He said internal differences were so bad he should leave for the good of the club.

Ternana, in *Serie A* briefly in 1974-75, became the eighth second division side to part company this season with their coach — and the fourth to see off two! Maldini had taken over from Edmondo Fabbri, the man who led Italy to the 1966 World Cup and defeat by North Korea.

ITALO ALLODI, the general manger of Inter in their successful early sixties, and then Juventus five years or so back, could be returning to club soccer.

Allodi and the FIGC don't see eye-to-eye on his plans to expand the Coverciano coaching centre at Florence, and several big clubs are already putting out feelers.

AC Milan are one — and they certainly need someone to lick their administration into shape. Roma are another and Napoli a third. In fact Napoli president Corrado Ferlaino has already had exploratory talks recently with Allodi.

Currently, too, a great number of top class Swedish footballers are earning their living all over Europe. In West Germany's Bundesliga alone, there are seven Swedes mostly in key positions. They have the right attitude toward professional football, are clean living, disciplined, in first class athletic condition and are willing to learn.

But as for their country's needs, it is clear that national manager Georg, nicknamed "Aby", Ericsson has problems. Mainly of selection, supervision and availability that few men in his position have to worry about. In the present squad Ericsson again relies heavily on players scattered around Europe. In fact if he had to pick a team now for the next World Cup qualifying match v. Switzerland at home on June 8, at least seven "mercenaries" would be included — six of them resident in West Germany!

The best known are goalkeeper Ronnie Hellstroem (27) who was voted the best custodian in the last world series, and striker Roland Sandberg (31), who are both with FC Kaiserslautern, plus Ralph Edstroem (25) widely regarded as the best header of a ball in the world, who plays for Dutch champions PSV Eindhoven.

Record

Other fine players include Björn Nordquist (34) the stopper who also spent several years at Eindhoven before returning home to IFK Goeteborg. Nordquist, who together with Hellstroem also starred for Sweden back in the 1970 World Cup, is their most experienced man and a holder of a record 96 caps.

But the greatest promise shows the schemer Anders Linderoth (26), from Oester Vaxjoe, who at 5 ft. 7 in. is the smallest member of the team and the reigning "Footballer of the Year" in Sweden for 1976. It will obviously be just a matter of time before this highly skilled midfield "general" is snatched by a foreign club. Other experienced men in Sweden's line up are full back Björn Andersson (26) and midfielder Conny Torstensson (27), who are both with Bayern Munich.

Team coach Ericsson, who incidentally has been in charge since 1971, began his programme of preparation for this year in Spain. In Sweden there is of course a very long winter break, when between November and April is not possible to play football. Eighteen men were selected for a training camp, all of them home based and several promising younger players. Naturally, the Spaniards were also highly interested in surveying these talents that could strengthen their own professional clubs.

Migration

In an interview Ericsson stressed the problems which he is facing: "If I were wholly responsible for Swedish football, then I would limit the migration of players abroad. No players under the age of 26-27 should be allowed to leave the country.

"For most of the youngsters are not quite mature and they often fail to adapt to local conditions. Unfortunately, most European club managers are looking for ready made stars, because they are expected to bring results. If a young player does not fulfil their expectations then he is discarded, before he even had time to develop and mature."

It is astonishing to find that Sweden manages to produce such strong national teams when one considers the difficulties experienced by their clubs and coaches constantly deprived of their best talent. Still, Sweden have come a long way since football was first introduced to their country by a band of Scots, who worked in textile mills in Gothenburg and joined the Oergryte club there.

The British influence lasted till the end of the last war, when many English coaches came to Sweden, the most famous being George Raynor, who even became their national manager. But later the Swedes moved on, impressed first by Austrian and then by Hungarian football and thus they were able to broaden their outlook, thanks to the work of foreign coaches.

The Swedes are now reaping the benefit of having copied the best in world football and that is why they are today worthy of joining the elite in Argentina in 1978.

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LOOKING AT SOCCER with BRIAN GLANVILLE

THERE HAS been, in recent editions of WORLD SOCCER, a certain note of masochistic hysteria about the British game. How *can* we watch such crude encounters, we are asked from New York, while at home, native critics and naturalised Europeans castigate the British game. In many respects, I feel they are quite justified in doing so, but I suspect their criticism is going a little too far. British soccer is not quite as bad and foreign soccer is really not quite so good as these Jeremiahs would have us all believe. It was especially ironical to read such effusions of gloom and despair in the very day that the *Corriere Dello Sport*, of Rome, speculated on the decline of that very West German soccer which my friend Paul Gardner was eulogising, on the basis of Bayern Munich, Borussia Munchengladbach and Hamburg's indifferent performances in the first leg of their various European quarter-finals. As for the Czechs, despite the dazzling performance of their international team in last June's European Nations Cup finals, they had made negligible impact on the three European club tournaments.

IS BRITISH SOCCER AS BAD AS WE SUGGEST?

Before excoriating and writing off British soccer, it would be as well to listen to such as Enzo Bearzot, the Italian national team manager, whose side will most probably qualify for the 1978 World Cup at the expense of England. Bearzot remains an *admirer* of British football.

He speaks with breathless admiration of the League match he saw earlier this season between Derby County and Liverpool, when the loudspeakers at half-time called for applause for both teams. He scorns the notion that Italian players are technically superior to our own; juggling with the ball, he insists, is by no means the whole of technique, which must also consist of being able to kick it long distances to where you want it to go; something which Italian players, in his view, can seldom do. He also admires the stamina, the physical commitment and the heading power of British players.

Let me not embark upon a eulogy of the British game, which seems to me to have fallen behind both technically and tactically. On the other hand, it would be foolish to insist — most of all if one scarcely, for whatever reason, ever goes to a British game — that this has been entirely a depressing season.

The persistent success of Liverpool in our competitions may emphasise the deficiencies of our game, the ludicrously large number of matches, the premium placed upon endurance, the lack of players of international class, true skill, may further underline our exalting of endurance over technique, but there have been many consolations.

There have been games of great quality and excitement; I think especially of the League Cup semi-final return leg at Villa Park between Aston Villa and Queens Park Rangers, of the fine Cup tie at The Dell between Southampton and Manchester United.

Manchester United, indeed, whatever their failure in Turin against Juventus in the UEFA Cup, have been one of the chief motives of hope this season. After a descent into the trough, they recovered to reassert their splendid commitment to attack and to skill, their bold insistence on playing with two genuine wingers in little Hill and Coppell, and with four men up, adding the powerful and elegant Jimmy Greenhoff to Stuart Pearson, in the centre of attack.

They are a young team and certainly not a great one, they have a manager, in Tommy Docherty, who is nothing if not controversial and unpredictable, but they have chosen the way of genuine football, pursuing it with courage and success. To this extent, they hold out far more hope than even a team like Ipswich Town.

Jimmy Greenhoff scores for Manchester United against Leeds United in an FA Cup semi-final tie, won 2-1 by the Manchester club.

Pastures

We are all delighted to see Ipswich flourish, an agreeable club from a most endearing part of England, a country club with, if you like, country manners, but their bold, broad, long-ball, Liverpudlian tactics are not those best calculated to lead our football into pastures new.

Everton's Mick Lyons climbs above Ray Kennedy of Liverpool during their FA Cup semi-final meeting.

"We kick our possession away," says Dave Sexton, of the wretchedly supported, even "unfashionable", Queens Park Rangers, whom he has so successfully weaned away from such prodigality. QPR have not fared well this season in the League, though please do not readily forget that they nearly won it last time, but their successes at home in the UEFA Cup over Slovan Bratislava, Cologne and AEK Athens manifested a kind of football to which few other teams in England can aspire.

Insularity is our curse. The Germans were for years as "physical" as we were, but the advent of Franz Beckenbauer, the ambitions of Helmut Schoen, enabled them to develop a new kind of football. They prepare their managers immeasurably better than we do, sending them to football school, so that their directors, probably no better qualified or no more intelligent in football terms than our own crass lot, are better protected from their own stupidity.

Speculated

The head of their football school in Cologne, who also happens to be team manager of their schools international side, recently speculated on why English schools teams were so splendidly dominant, while beyond youth level, our teams fell by the wayside.

A few words with Ron Greenwood of West Ham United would clarify matters for him wonderfully. "Something happens to our writers," said Ernest Hemingway, once, sadly discussing American literature. Something unquestionably happens to many of our footballers when they fall into the mire of mediocrity, caution, discouragement of initiative, of our League clubs; but their early superiority has more to do with physical strength and aggression than with real footballing skills.

For those, like myself, who watch a good deal of schoolboy competition — having a 15 year old son who plays for one of the more successful London schools teams — it is depressing to see how certain schools' coaches encourage their players to kick the opposition out of the game.

Inherent

There has always, in England, been an exaggerated emphasis on physical commitment and courage. It seems to be something inherent in the British character and thus inherent in the game itself, invented and developed in the Public Schools, where "funking" was the worst of all sins, carried on when the working classes took over the game.

The desperate anxiety to be there first, to win the ball, to avoid an accusation of cowardice, places a premium on virility at the expense of skill and subtlety. Ramsey's wingless wonders of the 1966 World Cup — though don't forget how much they were admired elsewhere, how for four years the world beat a path to our door, how in 1970 England were probably the second best team in the World Cup, and a better one than 1966's — played their part in such mistaken emphasis. So did the harsh and often cynical Leeds United teams of Revie's middle period at Elland Road.

One could go on at length, but must limit oneself to a further, final point. Gentlemen; there *are* such things as cycles. In 1953/54 we all wanted to Learn to Play the Hungarian Way, till Comes the Revolution of 1956, and with the defection of Puskas, Kocsis, Czibor, Hungarian football quietly collapses. The Dutch didn't qualify for a World Cup between 1938 and 1974. French football, suddenly — I'm delighted to say — exuberant and gifted again, has re-emerged only after a decade and a half of mediocrity.

In Britain we need better coaches; in my mind, foreign coaches, bringing us the possibility of new ideas, cross fertilisation, which we so foolishly, island that we are, eschew. Most of our truly gifted players are confused testament to the break-up of working-class culture and families. But let us not foolishly throw out the baby with the bathwater. After all, are not even the supposedly incomparable Brazilians, who supposedly produce footballers with the facility — and more — of coffee beans, struggling still?

There is too much apocalyptic thinking (thinking?) around.

ESPANOL TRANSFER LIST THE LOT!

ALL OUR players are on the transfer list — that was the shock announcement from Espanol, the 'other' club in Barcelona.

"We can't do anything else," said president Manual Meler. "Last season we lost £250,000. This season the loss could be even bigger — unless we have a good run in the Cup."

Rumours are understandably rife that Espanol have already agreed to sell Daniel Solsona to Real Madrid.

There are more financial troubles too over a claim put into civil court by Juan Vila Reyes, Meler's predecessor, for repayment by Espanol of a loan of £90,000. Espanol counter that the sum was a gift.

No wonder they wanted Chile to take out an insurance worth £400,000 for the privilege of borrowing Carlos Caszely for the World Cup qualifiers! Chile named Caszely in their squad but Meler refused to release him. Caszely still flew out however — "Jose Santamaria, our coach, said I could go," he complained when Meler levied a £1,250 fine on his return!

The 26-year-old striker has had a poor season, what with five months out injured. He hasn't been able to find form since. In the 2-1 win over Santander he asked Santamaria to pull him off 20 minutes from time.

Meanwhile Espanol have slipped to ninth in the table after their promising start. That Santander game was sandwiched between two heavy defeats — 5-0 to Las Palmas and 4-1 to Real Madrid.

Atletico Madrid pull away from Barcelona...

WHILE MORE has been going wrong for Barcelona, Atletico Madrid have taken advantage to stretch their lead at the top to four points and only major catastrophe can stop them repeating their 1973 title success.

Atletico have lost full back Ruben Diaz, sold back to Racing Buenos Aires, but they have Joao Leivinha ready to return after serious injury to aid their run-in, in both the championship and the Cup-winners' Cup.

Atletico's players were paid a £2,500 bonus each for beating Levsky-Spartak in the quarter finals, while Barcelona were of course going out to Bilbao in the UEFA Cup — and that was the least of their problems.

Heavy debts and an urgent need for repairs to their Nou Camp stadium — products of hasty construction work 20 years back — have prompted president Agustin Montal to prepare as far for a new membership issue to raise funds.

Meanwhile, as far as results on the pitch are concerned, who can blame Montal saying: "Ever since Cruyff was sent off against Malaga everything has gone wrong."

Juan Carlos Heredia was sent off in the 2-2 away draw with Hercules and then, despite two goals from skipper Cruyff, CFB were held 3-3 at home by Sevilla, a modest mid-table side.

Prompted

Then came the UEFA Cup second leg, with Bilbao gaining a 2-2 draw which prompted trainer Rinus Michels to slate fellow countryman Johan Neeskens. The Dutch midfielder, said Michels, was totally to blame. He had been supposed to mark Javier Irureta, and it was Irureta who scored both Bilbao goals.

Yet, as Irureta remarked: "Behind Neeskens were some more defenders, a sweeper and a goalkeeper. Were they blameless?"

At any rate, matters went from bad to worse.

The following Sunday, while Atletico were beating Betis 3-1, Barcelona went down 1-0 at Burgos — and Cruyff, of all people, missed a penalty in the last minute!

Of eight penalties this season Barcelona have missed five — three failures by Neeskens, who had hardly missed one in his life before, one by Manuel Clares, now this one for Cruyff, whose shot rebounded away off a post.

Yet despite that penalty miss, referee Fernandez Quiros was still mobbed at the end by Burgos fans, players and officials angry about the award — for hands by Kresic after Olmo shot — and also at the fact that Quiros had sent off the innocent Palmer during the original scuffle and not Ruiz Igartua, the protest leader.

As Quiros said later: "Thank goodness Cruyff missed. I dread to think what would have happened to him if he'd scored."

In the melee Burgos president Antonio Martinez Laredo received a blow on the head from a linesman's flag. Laredo claimed later that he had been merely trying to protect the referee. In fact, at the subsequent disciplinary hearing he was banned from the ground for six months and Ruiz Igartua was suspended for 10 matches. Burgos were also fined £1,500.

Barcelona's problems continued into the night. On the way back to Catalonia the team stayed overnight in Madrid and Neeskens, Carlos Rexach and Marcial Pina broke curfew to go to a discotheque with Rexach's actress girlfriend, Barbara Rey.

Friendship

Rexach had already been in trouble with a photographer in a nightclub over his friendship with Miss Rey — and there was more trouble this time.

The next day, while Neeskens escaped the immediate blast by flying to Holland with Cruyff to prepare for the World Cup-tie in Belgium, Michels told Rexach and Marcial they were out of the first team squad.

The trio were also fined £1,000 each — "a lot to pay for just one whisky," mused Neeskens later. But then, he could afford to treat the matter lightly. He's just signed a new two-year contract for a minimum £150,000.

Meanwhile, at the foot of the first division Burgos are still in serious danger of returning quickly to the second division. Malaga are virtually down already. The third place should be filled by any one from Celta de Vigo, Zaragoza, Santander or Elche.

ATLETICO Madrid staff were extremely upset to hear of the death of Heraldo Becerra a matter of hours after playing one of his first games back in Buenos Aires with Boca Juniors.

Becerra, transferred back from Atletico 10 days before after a six-year stay in Madrid, had just played as a second-half substitute in Boca's 2-0 defeat by Estudiantes.

Afterwards he was in a car driven by team-mate Ruben Favreto when it collided with a lorry. Becerra was killed, a friend badly hurt, but Favreto escaped without serious injury.

Becerra's wife was in London at the time with a dancing troupe, but flew immediately to South America with their son.

Becerra, born on April 21, 1946 in Rio Grande del Sur, Brazil, played first for Cruzeiro, then moved to Argentina's Newells Old Boys. Atletico bought him in 1971 for £110,000 and played a total of 149 games, scoring 29 goals. He also played once for Spain, against Turkey, though later his qualifications were challenged in the courts by Bilbao and San Sebastian.

MANUAL BENITEZ PEREZ, better known as the matador El Cordobes, is back in soccer.

El Cordobes signed — more as a publicity stunt than anything else — for Cordoba, the town from which he takes his nom de guerre, ten years ago. Now he's joined a small town provincial team, Union Deportiva Constantina — though he needed special permission from the FEF since, at 40, he's over the accepted age limit.

SEVERAL Spanish clubs were interested in the news that Uruguay dropped the once highly-rated Fernando Morena during their World Cup fiasco.

Could be seeing him in Spain next season.

Ayala scores from the penalty spot for Atletico Madrid in a Cup Winners Cup match against Levski of Bulgaria.

KEMPES LEADS RACE

MARIO ALBERTO KEMPES, Valencia's 22-year-old Argentine centre forward, is favourite to win the Trofeo Pichichi for the league's top scorer, despite the upheavals in the club.

He has 18 so far this season, and took the lead thanks to two headers in the 2-2 draw at Santander.

Strangely the last foreigner to win the award also played for Valencia — the Brazilian, Waldo, ten years ago.

Kempes has his sights on a total to beat the 21 he scored in his last campaign in Argentina. The problem is that Valencia's attack — the league's most potent weapon early on — is misfiring.

When Bilbao beat them 2-1 to leapfrog into third place, Valencia had won only one game in five and scored just five goals — one a penalty from 'Lobo' Diarte in the 1-1 home draw with Real Madrid.

That match was the first which saw Manolo Mestre, Valencia's former stopper, back as caretaker manager — the position he finished in last season. General manager Pasieguito handed over team affairs to Mestre a couple of weeks after being nominated by the board to stand in for sacked Heriberto Herrera — he obviously felt that youth coach Mestre was the better qualified.

Mestre would doubtless be a good long-term choice, but the desire for a 'big name' means his chances are virtually nil. Miguel Munoz is one name being bandied around, Miljan Miljanic another, also Marcel Domingo. There are rumours too that Valencia have approached Blagoje Vidinic, the man who took Morocco to the 1970 World Cup Finals and Zaire through in 1974. He will soon be looking for a job after failing to keep up his record when Colombia were thrashed at the second attempt by Brazil in the recent series of qualifiers.

I would have thought that after their unhappy experiences in the past two seasons with two other Yugoslavs — Milovan Ciric and Dragan Milosevic — the board would have fought shy of a third.

There is a possibility of a return for Alfredo di Stefano, who coached Valencia from 1970 to 1974 and, in 1971, took the club to their first league title for 24 years.

Good news has been the return after a ten-month injury lay-off of midfielder and club captain Pepe Claramunt. Claramunt, whose return will also interest national team boss Ladislao Kubala, is now 31, but judging by his lively display in his first match back — a 0-0 draw away to Malaga which put Valencia into the next round of the Cup — he has a few more years in him yet.

Attention

A broken leg last May put Claramunt out and he said: "At one time I was ready to retire. This was a couple of months after the injury when the leg didn't seem to be making any progress. So I started paying more attention to my business than to soccer."

Claramunt also felt that HH2 hadn't seen him in Valencia's future, and for that reason was pleased at Mestre's appointment. Now, with Claramunt to provide some needed experience and stability, Valencia, can think seriously about making sure they're in the UEFA Cup next term.

News from France

Metz curse

MICHEL PLATINI will be 22 this June, and Metz will still be kicking themselves for letting him slip through their grasp; all on account of a plastic bag. This was the bag he was asked to blow into when he went to Metz, his nearest professional club, for a physical examination, prior to being signed. Once, twice he inflated the bag. On the third occasion, he fainted. So Metz turned him down, and it was Nancy who he joined, Nancy who have had the benefit of his outstanding talents.

It was a Nancy director who originally conceived the idea that Platini should train for free kicks with a line of dummies. These four dummies, resembling nothing in the world so much as robots in Karel Capek's RUR, with their great, square heads, are lined up in front of the goal, for Platini to "bend" his cunning, swerving, banana kicks around them. He became mildly resentful at being categorised in international football as a player who could score goals "only" from free kicks. Thus the goal he scored against Eire at the Parc des Princes this season gave him special pleasure, because it came from a cross shot in the course of open play.

He is a different character from Dominique Rocheteau, the other outstandingly gifted member of the New Wave of French footballers; much jollier and more extravert, spreading confidence and good humour among his team mates off the field, as well as contributing so largely on it. He has remarked that when he once shared a room with Rocheteau, on the occasion of an international game, he found him a lonely, isolated figure by contrast with himself, who was able to live with his family and had a number of close friends among the Nancy team. Be that is it may, these are two footballers any country might envy us.

ROUYER IMPRESSES

DOMINIQUE ROCHETEAUNIS by European consent the best right winger in France; but we have something of an embarrassment of riches. Olivier Rouyer, scorer of the only goal of the home game against West Germany at the Parc des Princes, is a player of great style and flair; moreover, he has the advantage of having grown up as a footballer with the brilliant young Michel Platini, with whom he plays now for Nancy.

Rouyer, a tiny, modest young man, says that he benefits enormously from playing with Platini, not only because he receives some delightful passes, but because when he is himself in possession and not quite sure what to do, rather than set off on a hopeful and perhaps unproductive run, he can give the ball to Platini, nearby; and Platini will always do something good with it.

The ironic feature of his match against West Germany is that though he did eventually score the winner, he also, earlier, missed a very good chance, when clean through. He blamed himself; typically — for playing the ball with the inside of the left foot, as Sepp Maier came out to meet him, rather than with the outside of the right.

Michel Platini reassured him, at half-time — presciently — that if he had another such chance, he would put it away. Rouyer, feeling very down, cheered up. Never before, he said, had he realised with such intensity that it need only a word, a phrase, to throw everything into a different perspective. When next he had an opportunity, he swivelled a quarter circle to hit the ball perfectly past Sepp Maier, convinced when he shot that it would be a goal.

Attached

At 21, with quite enough money to find himself a flat in Nancy, Rouyer prefers to live at home with his father, mother and sister. He is much attached to his family, remembering how, as a schoolboy, his father comforted him when he came home crying — what a familiar story! — because he'd been told he was too small to join in the football, and later, at 16 or 17, how his father forbade him to go out evenings, impressing on him that if he wanted to become a pro footballer, discipline was essential. "If I hadn't listened to him," he says, "I wouldn't be where I am today."

He feels equally grateful to the Nancy-Lorraine club, the only one he has ever had; though he was lent by them, to mature him, to the Second Division side, Chaumont. Last season, he exploded with a splendid performance at Blois for the French amateurs against the full Rumanian national side, in an Olympic qualifying game, when he got no fewer than three of the French goals.

Injuries

He's very insistent on the subject of his "luck," injuries to Nancy players and to those due to play for French international teams giving him an unexpected chance. More to the point has been his consistent ability to take such chances. He knows his technique must improve; and works on it diligently. A young man to watch, with an attitude surely to admire.

...by ANDRE DUCLOS

POKOU INJURED— RENNES STRUGGLE

SAD to see a club like Rennes in such difficulties. Knocked out of the Cup by Lorient on 2-1 aggregate, they thus lost a tie of the strugglers; two clubs in grave actual danger of dissolution.

Would it all have been splendidly different had Laurent Pokou not received that severe injury and missed most of this season? The brilliant Ivory Coast centre-forward, who took so long making up his mind to come to France then fell upon such ill fortune when he did come, neatly headed a lovely pass to Maier in the 68th minute of the return game, but Maier fluffed the opportunity and Rennes winning only 1-0 went out. Their President, M. Lemoux, spoke bitterly afterwards.

There was real danger, he said, that Rennes now wouldn't be able even to afford to play their away matches. Maybe, he pursued, he was the bad President of a bad club.

He pointed out that Rennes received 400 million old francs, about £40,000 I suppose, a year from the municipality, but had to pay out 38.5 million in various taxes. In 1967/7 they were making a profit, but there was a tremendous backlog of debt which much more than swallowed it up. Only 7,000 fans came along for the second leg against Lorient, themselves still deep in debt.

Bastia have as we know been one of the surprising teams of the season, thanks in large measure to the splendid play on the left wing of the Yugoslav star Dragan Dzajic; but also thanks to the efforts in attack of Claude Papi.

When Stefan Kovacs, the the little Rumanian, came to manage the French international team a few years ago, he was surprised to find out that Papi was a lot younger than he looked; and he put him in the French team. He came on the play ten dazzling minutes against Denmark at the Parc des Princes, and twenty less impressive minutes against Hungary. That was that: but now he doesn't seem to care. It's history he says, and he isn't one of those who care to relive the past.

Even today people tend to undervalue him, perhaps because of his appearance. They say he is slow but admit grudgingly that he does ping the ball about rather well. He says life has been made much easier for him by the coming of Dzajic, not least because when he is in possession he always knows that he can find Dzajic in an unmarked position. Previously, with the talented Zimako, he was never quite sure what was going on, where he could find his man.

Papi is also pleased to be playing with a number 10 on his back rather than a number 8, since it suits him to drift to the left. A modest man, he says he is playing better because the whole team is playing better, but the fact remains that he has been scoring plenty of goals as well as "lending a hand to the best attack in Division One."

Paris loves stars from Chevalier to...Dahleb!

WHEN Paris Saint Germain can attract 45,000 fans to the Parc des Princes for a league match won 3-1 against Lens, it makes you wonder how on earth Paris could remain for all those years without a major League team, reduced to pitiful resorts such as combining the famous Racing Club, Heaven help us all, with Strasbourg, and playing alternate games in the capital and in Alsace! Of course the splendid new Parc des Princes stadium has something to do with the surge of enthusiasm, but even so, and even granted that some years have passed since those dark days of no football or ersatz football in Paris, the support was surely there for anything resembling a decent team. Perhaps the answer is that until the last year or two, no one could provide one.

Paris, of course, loves stars, whether they be Maurice Chevalier, Mistinguette, Rudi Hiden, the Austrian flying goalkeeper who took French nationality and played for Racing Club in the late 1930s . . . or Mustapha Dahleb, the Algerian who is the current toast of the Parisian team.

Dahleb (25) tends to be classified as a left flanking midfield player, but the truth of the matter is that he can do anything and everything on that left flank, score dazzling individual goals or make them for other people. No wonder that when there was a prospect of his being transferred a few months ago to Brazil in the proposed wake of the Portuguese cap, Humberto, Vasovic, the Yugoslav ex-stopper who now manages Paris S-G, announced that if Dahleb went, he would go as well.

The word "Super" is perpetually being used about Dahleb, recognised at the moment as just about the best midfield player of foreign extraction in the League; which is not exactly lacking in such figures. One of the two goals he scored against Lens will give you some idea of his quality. With a sudden acceleration he went right into the heart of the Lens defence, left two defenders standing, one after the other, then beat the goalkeeper with a searing cross shot.

Much of the time, Paris tend to play him in an up front position. They have had their ups and downs, and Vasovic, who once of course won European Cup medals with both Partizan and Ajax, had been criticised for being a bad loser after accusing both Nimes and Bastia of rough tactics when Paris were thrashed by them. By and large, however, the team has truly entertained.

Such experienced Africans as M'Pele and Tokoto in attack blend with such as Dahleb — and, in goal, the veteran Yugoslavian keeper, Pantelic, still highly capable, though he long since was cast out by Bastia in favour of his successor in the Yugoslav goal, Red Star's Petrovic. Add Yvan Curkovic of Saint Etienne, and you have no fewer than three Yugoslav international keepers in our Championship!

Player Portrait

by Keir Radnedge

CUCCINO WITH SC

THE IRONY of Franco Cuccinotta is that though most Italian club presidents would give their eye teeth for a man with his flair for goals, they can't sign him — even though he holds an Italian passport!

Cuccinotta is the 24-year-old Sicilian who has proved such a hit in his first season with FC Zurich.

As I write he leads the Swiss scoring charts with 16 goals and, up to the Champions' Cup semi-finals, was equal top goal-getter this season with five — the same as Gerd Muller.

But, having been brought to Switzerland as an eight-year-old, and being thus a resident abroad, there is no way Cuccinotta, under present Italian rules, can move back to his native country to earn his living.

Neither can he play for Switzerland, of course, because he is Italian. And the Swiss national team could certainly do with the kind of opportunism he's been displaying this season.

Cuccinotta is a rare man in Switzerland — he's a full-time professional in a country of part-timers and his Latin skills have proved ideally suited to complement the German-Swiss discipline and consistency of his Zurich colleagues.

But it's doubtful how long they can hang on to him if he maintains his present form.

Cuccinotta made his Swiss debut for Montreux in the second division. This was his local team, for it was to Montreux that his parents had moved from Sicily in search of work when young Franco was eight years old.

Mechanic

He had been born on June 22, 1952, and was a mechanic by trade. Football was a hobby, even though it took only a season for him to become a target for several first division clubs.

Lausanne were quickest with an offer and Cuccinotta joined them in the summer of 1972 for a two-year stay. It would not prove a success. He never settled in, the fans didn't like him, he scored few goals and his general form was inconsistent.

After barely a season he was loaned to Chenois and it was now that he started to show what he could do. His potential interested Miroslav Blazevic, the Yugoslav coach at Sion (and, ironically, later Lausanne).

Sion agreed to pay £20,000 for Cuccinotta — £10,000 to Lausanne, and £10,000 to the player. Cuccinotta was delighted . . . until he discovered that Blazevic had arranged that he shouldn't receive half his signing-on fee until the end of the season.

Blazevic, a former Dynamo Zagreb wing-half, knew Cuccinotta by reputation as a lively youngster who was hardly the best-disciplined of players. Accordingly, the Yugoslav set out to 'tame' him. The trick with the signing-on fee was one method, to give Cuccinotta something to aim for, a long-term goal to achieve.

Blazevic's training sessions were another. Cuccinotta had never worked so hard and, as the season went on, he started to appreciate the value of hard work. The goals started going in, his form improved and he started to think about his game for the first time.

Cuccinotta stands five foot eight, but it was under Blazevic's tutelage that he learned how to make the best of himself in the air and how best to lead a forward line by using the wings to draw defenders out and help create space for colleagues to move into.

Blazevic planned to finish off Cuccinotta's treatment with "the best medicine of all — a spell on the substitutes' bench."

But the effects of injuries on a small squad meant that was never possible. Cuccinotta had to play, and indeed he finished as Sion's top scorer with 14 goals.

Professional

The next season he hit 15 more — and that provided more than enough evidence for Zurich president Edi Nägeli to provide the cash for a £30,000 transfer fee.

That provided Cuccinotta with the best move of his career and encouraged him to demonstrate his professional awareness as he decided to turn full-time professional, one of very few in Switzerland.

"I'm paid well enough not to need to do anything else now," he says. But the spare time in the evenings now he's not always training after a day's work, isn't wasted. Though Cuccinotta speaks fluent Italian and French he's taking German language courses to be able to fit in more easily with his new club.

Not that all the players are strangers. For instance, Pierre Chapuisat, the skipper, was a team-mate at Lausanne. Indeed, Cuccinotta was extremely surprised to find Chapuisat with the skipper's role, for the sweeper has a career record of more bookings than international caps — 24 to 21!

Victories

Konietzka has already earned a big reputation in Switzerland. He joined Zurich as player-coach in 1971 after filling the same role at Winterthur and his overall record is tremendous — three championships, three Cup wins, two other Cup final appearances, two victories in the Cup of the Alps and twice a Champions' Cup quarter finalist.

Now he can add a Champions' Cup semi-final to that, having brought Zurich back to the round they reached in 1964 when they were thrashed by Real Madrid.

Konietzka was a prolific scorer in West Germany in the early sixties with Borussia Dortmund, then TSV 1860 Munich. But as a player he never had much chance to repeat his goal feats in the Champions' Cup.

He scored a hat-trick for Munich against Omonia Nicosia in the first round in 1966-67, but a West German domestic ban after an incident with a linesman ruled him out of the second round defeat by Madrid.

Now of course Konietzka, having won everything that matters in Switzerland several times, had his sights set on the Champions' Cup. Not that he was seriously expecting to win it — but to go at least as far as the semi-finals if not the final itself, was his aim.

In the sharp-shooting opportunist talents of Cuccinotta Konietzka saw a valuable reinforcement to join Peter Risi up front and Cuccinotta's move paid off within just 60 seconds of the start of the first leg in the first round with Glasgow Rangers at Ibrox.

Rene Botteron sent Risi through the middle, his shot thudded back from a post, and Cuccinotta, following up, put the Swiss ahead. Derek Parlane equalised after Derek Johnstone headed against the bar in the 33rd minute, but Zurich went home knowing that a 0-0 draw would be enough in their own 28,500-capacity Letzigrund stadium.

In fact a goal by Rosario Martinelli provided a 1-0 win, but . . . this match also provided a booking which would prove costly. Spanish referee Emilio Guriceta, who showed the yellow card to a number of players for trivial offences, included Cuccinotta in his campaign. . . .

Consistent

The second round was easy. Zurich were drawn against Turun Palloseura of Finland. A goal from Cuccinotta brought a 2-0 win at home and he scored the only goal in the return in front of a meagre 823 crowd.

All this time Zurich looked well set for their fourth successive Swiss championship, but by the time the quarter final with Dynamo Dresden came around, Servette were edging in front with more consistent football.

Zurich had done a lot of work during the winter break, training hard throughout January and against Dresden, as Konietzka said later, "all that sweat paid off."

Cuccinotta struck again, after 41 minutes, hitting in a long centre from Pirmin Stierli, but only a last-minute goal from Peter Risi sent them to East Germany with a 2-1 lead.

The next Sunday Zurich showed no reaction at all. They smashed Young Boys Berne 5-1 with Cuccinotta getting a hat-trick. But the return with Dresden proved one of his most unfortunate games of the season.

TTA—PLAYER
ORING FLAIR

FC Zurich President Edi Nageli (centre) with coach Konietzka.

After 17 minutes Spanish referee Franco Martinez awarded a penalty when Stierli brought down Reinhard Haefner. The Zurich defenders were upset, but they walked away . . . all except Cuccinotta. He protested too long and too vehemently, and that meant the yellow card and automatic suspension from the first leg of the semi-final — if Zurich got there.

Because when Hartmut Schade converted the penalty, Dresden were ahead thanks to their away goal.

Cuccinotta tried desperately to make amends, and eight minutes before half-time he equalised. Now Zurich were in front. But only briefly. Early in the second half Hans-Jürgen Kreische scored twice and Zurich were 3-1 down. Yet within a minute of that third goal, Risi got a second for Zurich.

Ten minutes later Cuccinotta was landed with a chance to assure the Swiss a place in the last four. He waited too long on the ball, and the moment was gone. Cuccinotta and his team-mates had to sweat it out to the final whistle.

Afterwards Konietzka's initial reaction was of delight, of course. He was especially pleased that one of his training ploys had paid dividends. Before the Dresden tie he put his team through training matches of 120 minutes non-stop to build up stamina and resistance. That had paid off in the closing minutes as the East Germans, fit enough themselves, had found their strength drained as they tried in vain to get back on top of a game they once seemed to have in their pocket.

But two days later, when Zurich learned they must play the home game first against Liverpool, Konietzka was regretting that his other ploy hadn't paid off totally.

Konietzka had refereed those gruelling training matches — but he had done so without awarding free kicks and letting fouls go unpenalised. His aim was to teach his players self-control, so that they wouldn't react badly to any provocation.

Instead, what had happened? His top scorer had forgotten it all, and let himself be booked for talking too much.

Cuccinotta himself assured everyone that "my replacement will do just as well as I could against Liverpool," but that was hardly being realistic. Cuccinotta has been Zurich's big success this season and his sharp control and acceleration would be bound to be missed.

Zurich officials predict a tremendous future for Cuccinotta and he certainly has the talent. Whether he has the temperament is a different matter and whether that bright future will be realised in Zurich is another question.

Cuccinotta marries in the summer and he knows well enough that a footballer's life is a short one. If the money is good enough he will move on. He has only a one-year contract with Zurich, and has expressed an interest in following Daniel Jeandupeux to France.

Berti Vogts, skipper of Borussia Monchengladbach.

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS C

Anglo-G expect

REMARKABLE, but true. This Champions' Cup Final will be the first staged in Rome's magnificent Olympic stadium.

And though it may be such a cliche to say "All roads lead to Rome," on May 25 that will undoubtedly be true as Liverpool and Borussia Moenchengladbach, first-time finalists each, battle for the honour of the world's most prestigious club prize.

There's a new trophy for them to fight over. Bayern made sure of the last by winning it three times. But whichever captain lifts the Cup at the end — Berti Vogts or Emlyn Hughes — there will be a new name in the role of honour.

This will be only the fourth time the Champions' Cup, founded by L'Equipe, the great Paris sports paper, in 1955, has been fought out at the last stage by a pair of non-Latin teams.

And the traditional undertones which add so much extra tension to an England-West German confrontation will again be barely hiding below the surface.

Happily it's soccer alone which divides the two nations now — but that has not meant any lessening of that little extra will to win. As far back as 1954, when West Germany's new world champions were beaten 3-1 at Wembley, the battle in sport was 'on'.

It took the 1966 World Cup Final and a fiercely disputed goal to introduce the present saga of Anglo-German rivalry.

The West Germans hit back from 2-0 down to topple holders England in the 1970 World Cup quarter finals, and then underlined their superiority by winning at Wembley 3-1 in the 1972 European Championship.

In club competition Bayern secured their second Champions' Cup by doggedly overcoming all manner of problems to beat Leeds 2-0 in Paris two years ago.

Still, there were pockets of resistance — most notably from Liverpool, who won the 1973 UEFA Cup beating . . . Borussia Moenchengladbach.

It was a famous victory. The first leg was rained off after quarter of an hour and in that time Liverpool saw how they could usefully introduce John Toshack to embarrass a defence in which Günter Netzer was a surprise, and mistaken, choice as sweeper.

Liverpool won the replayed game 3-0 and held on for a 2-0 defeat in Borussia's Boelkelberg stadium.

Borussia made up two years later, winning the UEFA Cup thanks to a 5-1 win away against Twente Enschede after being held 0-0 in West Germany. Anything you could do . . . last year Borussia were succeeded by Liverpool, winning the UEFA Cup for the second time.

but from that first final in 1973 there are plenty of survivors: Clemence, Lindsay, Smith, Hughes, Keegan, Toshack, Heighway and Callaghan on one side and Kleff, Danner, Vogts, Bonhof, Kulik, Wimmer, Simonsen and Heynckes on the other.

Little else has changed. Liverpool and Borussia have continued to dominate their own domestic competitions, but with new managers.

Out of the larger-than-life shadow of Bill Shankly has emerged 57-year-old Bo Paisley, a former Anfield player who has maintained all the traditions or work an endeavour.

Remarkably similar has been the calm Udo Lattek takeover at Borussia since Hennes Weisweiler left in 1975, bound fo a fraught nine months in Spain crossing swords with Johan Cruyff.

Neither side could be called classic an it's no good expecting a great final Liverpool have perpetual motion and tota commitment; Borussia have vivacity an style. Both sides sink a great deal o individual expertise in common team work.

So, not a great game, but certainly on with plenty of atmosphere. The Italians will see to that — and they won't b shouting for Liverpool. It'll be the World Cup casting another shadow. And there will be so many others, too.

Retirement

For instance, there are signs that bot teams are about to fall apart. Borussia with Vogts two years from retirement Herbert Wimmer aiming to go thi summer, Rainer Bonhof bound for Spai inside another 12 months, and Bayern casting envious eyes over Uli Stielike have reached this final too late to imagin they can repeat the three-year span of th Munich masters.

LIVERPOOL (England)	AGE	CAPS	
Ray Clemence	28	26	
Peter McDonnell	23		
Phil Neal	25	2	
Phil Thompson	23	8	
Emlyn Hughes (capt)	29	42	
Joey Jones	22	6	Wales
Tommy Smith	32	1	
Brian Kettle	21		
Ray Kennedy	25	5	
Jimmy Case	23		
Ian Callaghan	35	2	
Terry McDermott	25		
Kevin Keegan	26	28	
John Toshack	28	29	Wales
Steve Heighway	29	14	Eire
David Fairclough	20		
David Johnson	25	3	
Manager			
Bob Paisley	57		

BORUSSIA MG (West Germany)		AGE	CAPS	
Gl	Wolfgang Kneib	24		
	Wolfgang Kleff	30	6	
Df	Berti Vogts (capt)	30	75	
	Hans-Jürgen Kittkamp	29		
	Hans Klinkhammer	23		
	Rainer Bonhof	25	23	
	Frank Schäffer	24		
	Horst Wohlers	27		
Md	Herbert Wimmer	32	36	
	Uli Stielicke	22	5	
	Christian Kulik	24		
	Horst Köppel	31	5	
At	Allan Simonsen	24	15	Dnk
	Herbert Heidenreich	22		
	Jupp Heynckes	32	37	
	Karl del'Haye	21		
	Wilfried Hannes	20		
Manager				
	Udo Lattek	42		

CUP FINAL, OLYMPIC STADIUM, ROME, MAY 25

erman tie—don't a classic

says Keir Radnedge

It's hard to imagine, whatever the promise of substitute sensation David Fairclough, that Liverpool will be the same next year after the defection of their best player, Kevin Keegan, to Spain.

Both teams go into this final with domestic pressures. As I write Borussia, having squandered a seven-point lead at the head of the Bundesliga, are struggling to maintain a one point gap ahead of Eintracht Braunschweig.

In England Liverpool's traditional fixture pile-up threatens catastrophe as they forge ahead in pursuit of the FA Cup and League double.

Liverpool have been regularly going into Europe each year since 1964-65, when they took their first tilt at the Champions' Cup, only to go down in the semi-finals against holders Internazionale.

Borussia, who weren't promoted to the Bundesliga until 1965, didn't become a regular part of the European scene until much later, but unknown to most people, they were in fact founder entrants in the original 1960-61 Cup-winners' Cup — losing 3-0, 8-0 to Glasgow Rangers in the first round.

Support will not be lacking for either side in Rome, but it won't be of the usual home volume and that will suit Borussia far more than Liverpool. The Reds have surged to victory so often on the deafening tide of encouragement from the Anfield Kop they will feel almost naked without it.

Victories

Borussia, on the other hand, have scored some of their most vital victories away from home — as in that 1975 UEFA Cup Final, when a Jupp Heynckes hat-trick demolished Twente in front of the Dutch fans.

Yet even in reaching Rome Borussia have maintained that pattern. They won away to Torino — and were held at home; they were held at home by Brugge, and won in Belgium.

What does all this add up to?

As far as I'm concerned it means the Champions' Cup is about to enter a period of transition similar to that in the late 1960s, when it passed between Celtic, Manchester United and Milan before the Dutch monopoly.

Surprise

It wouldn't surprise me to see several years without any domination such as that of Real Madrid from 1956 to 1960, then Benfica in 1961 and 1962 and AC and Inter Milan for the next three years.

At this distance — 21 years since that first final! — it's easier to see European club soccer in perspective. How Spain's crackdown on limitless importation of foreigners ended Real's great run; how African soccer took its first strides to respectability via Benfica scouts in the Portuguese colonies; how the pressures for success led to deep-thinking tactical changes tailor-made initially for the defensive Italians. Later still came the development of total football and the Dutch and the Germans.

What next? Well, the immediate future is a tactical battle which looks slightly in Borussia's favour. Berti Vogts will presumably sit on Steve Heighway, with Bonhof following Keegan — a wandering assignment which will suit the German ideally and allow him far enough forward to try that devastating long-range shot.

Borussia will be the neater in midfield, but Liverpool's natural style will bring them markedly more of the play.

Unfortunately it could all hinge on injuries. Liverpool worry about Phil Thompson and John Toshack, Borussia, certain to be without Dietmar Danner, won't know about Heynckes until shortly before the game.

Thompson may lose his race to be fit for Rome after injuring a knee in a League game with Newcastle. In that case Tommy Smith — who retires this summer — will step in. And Smith's lack of pace could be ruthlessly exploited by the nimble little Dane, Allan Simonsen, who has apparently put aside thoughts of a transfer and signed a new two-year contract.

Cartilage

If Heynckes can overcome the cartilage trouble which indirectly led to that mid-season slump in the Bundesliga — since he is their top scorer — Borussia could have an advantage up front. But it seems more likely that Liverpool will have John Toshack recovered from his ankle injury to tease Borussia's new goalkeeper Wolfgang Knieb, in the air.

This is where Liverpool could win the game — and that means the fitness balance between Toshack and Heynckes being vital to a game which could go into extra time.

In that case all the odds must be on Liverpool. They have justly built a reputation for winning games in the closing stages because they are programmed to keep going at the same rate for 90 minutes — and more if necessary.

True, another Borussia from Dortmund overturned Liverpool in extra time in the 1966 Cup-winners' Cup Final, but that was a different Liverpool.

This time I think they may just tip the Anglo-German scales back towards England — but only just . . .

THE ROAD TO ROME

Liverpool
2-0 v Crusaders (Neal 19 pen, Toshack 64)
5-0 a v Crusaders (Keegan 40, Johnson 81, 89, McDermott 83, Heighway 86)
7-0 on aggregate

0-1 a v Trabzonspor
3-0 h v Trabzonspor (Heighway 8, Johnson 10, Keegan 18)
3-1 on aggregate

0-1 a v Saint-Etienne
3-1 h v Saint-Etienne (Keegan 2, Kennedy 59, Fairclough 84)
3-2 on aggregate

3-1 a v FC Zurich (Neal 15 and 60 pen, Heighway 48; Risi 6 pen)
HT: 1-1. Att: 30,000
3-0 v FC Zurich (Case 32 and 77, Keegan 80)
HT: 1-0. Att: 50,611
6-1 on aggregate

Borussia Moenchengladbach
0-1 a v Austria/WAC
3-0 h v Austria/WAC (Stielicke 38, Bonhof 54 pen, Heynckes 57)
3-1 on aggregate

2-1 a v Torino (Vogts 28, Klinkhammer 80)
0-0 h v Torino
2-1 on aggregate

2-2 h v Brugge (Kulik 43, Simonsen 62)
1-0 a v Brugge (Hannes 82)
3-2 on aggregate

0-1 a v Dynamo Kiev (Onishenko 69)
HT: 0-0. Att: 100,000
2-0 h v Dynamo Kiev (Bonhof 21 pen, Wittkamp 81)
HT: 1-0. Att: 70,000
2-1 on aggregate

Anderlecht to

Cup-winners' Cup Final — Anderlecht v Hamburg: Amsterdam, May 11

ANDERLECHT will make European history if they beat Hamburg to take the Cup-winners' Cup again in Amsterdam — for no club has ever won the competition two years running.

Some have come close. Fiorentina, the first winners in 1961, were back in the final the following year and went down only in a replay to Atletico Madrid. Then Atletico went through to the last stage the next year, only to lose out to Tottenham.

In fact even AC Milan, the only club to win the competition twice — in 1968 and 1973 — were beaten in the final when they came back in 1974.

So the omens are not good for the Belgians, even if, in Hamburg, they are facing one of the most unpredictable of teams. The West Germans have a fine side on paper, but have exasperated their fans beyond measure this season with a dogged refusal to be consistent.

At least they seem to be running into top form at the right time. They did well to come back from 3-1 down against Atletico Madrid, and underlined their improvement with a couple of good league results — a 5-0 thrashing of Bayern Munich, and a draw away to Borussia Moenchengladbach.

Yet this could be their last chance of a place in Europe next season. As I write they are seventh in the Bundesliga and far from sure of a UEFA Cup berth. Anderlecht, on the other hand, look well set for the third European contest next season, as they hold second spot in Belgium behind Brugge.

Anderlecht have provided a lot of entertainment in Europe over the years, first with their early naive soccer, then with the skills of Rob Rensenbrink, Francois van der Elst and Co. But I have a sneaking suspicion that they too could fall prey to the curse — which has so far defied previous holders.

Their progress to the final this year has been uncertain.

Dutch minnows Roda made them sweat both home and away in the first round, and Anderlecht's only clear repeat of their winning form of last season was in the 5-1, 5-1 thrashing of a weak Galatasaray.

English Second Division side Southampton gave them a fright in the quarter finals, and Napoli made it difficult in the last-but-one round. Anderlecht went down 1-0 in Italy in an even, of somewhat rough game, which saw Giuseppe Bruscolotti and Jean Thissen booked and Luciano Chiarugi and Giuseppe Massa helped off injured.

This was Napoli's first European semi-final, but the second leg events mean they will remember it only with bitterness. Silly defensive slips allowed Thissen and van der Elst to score with headers and Napoli allowed referee Bob Matthewson's refusal of a Speggiorin 'goal' after just four minutes and his deafness to a penalty appeal, upset them. Esposito also hit the bar.

Five Italians were booked by the man who was later named to referee the English FA Cup Final — Massa, Juliano, Speggiorin, La Palma and Burgnich.

Hamburg's progress to the final was steadier. Keflavik (3-0, 1-1) were easy meat, and Hearts provided few problems (4-2, 4-1). MTK Budapest were pushed aside (1-1, 4-1) and it was left to Atletico Madrid in the semi-finals to become the first team to beat the Germans.

This they did with an excellent first leg display before their own fans and could have had a couple more goals but for poor finishing. Hamburg punished their mistakes in the second leg.

In defence Hamburg are the steadier, even if as individuals they don't have men to match Gilbert van Binst or Thissen. But Kaltz is a sound player, and Hamburg have such a settled unit it seems unlikely there will be a place for Horst Blankenburg, despite the European experience he gained with Ajax.

In midfield Anderlecht have the more skill, even if Dutchman Aric Haan has been out of touch and Ludo Coeck upset by those who would turn him into a Beckenbaur-type sweeper. Then there are the attacking skills of Rensenbrink and van der Elst.

Looking at the teams man-for-man I'd go for Anderlecht, but on recent form Hamburg might have an edge. That could add up to the first European cup final to be decided on penalty kicks.

FOURTH TRY FOR JUV

UEFA Cup Final — Juventus v Athletic Bilbao: May 4 and 18

JUVENTUS to into their fourth European final in 12 years still looking for their first trophy — and this time they should land it, too.

In 1965 they lost 1-0 to Ferencvaros in the Fairs Cup, then in 1971 on away goals to Leeds, and in the Champions' Cup they went down 1-0 in Belgrade in 1973 to Ajax.

Now the only serious threat as they take on Athletic Bilbao — making their first appearance in a final after 20 years on and off in Europe — is that the pressures of their domestic rivalry with Torino may take the edge off their play.

Still, Juve have had to work hard to come this far and I don't expect them to throw in the towel at the last hurdle. In the first round they beat Manchester City (0-1, 2-0), and then it was back again to England to beat Manchester United (0-1, 3-0).

Schakhtor Donetsk went easily enough (3-0, 0-1) in the third round, and Magdeburg were impressively swept aside (3-1 away and 1-0) in the quarter finals.

The semi-final threw up AEK Athens, surprise earlier victors over Derby and Queen's Park Rangers, but no problem for the Zebras. The Greeks stonewalled for an hour in Turin and were helped by a gift goal for Papadopoulos, but two-goal Roberto Bettega saw Juve safely home 4-1 in the end, and the big striker scored the only goal in the return.

Dino Zoff had to make one fine save from Walter Wagner as the AEK forwards turned on the pressure, but Juve were so confident of their command that they included the nimble Franco Causio only as a second-half substitute.

Bilbao's progress has not been so steady. They did well in the first round to turn over a 1-0 defeat in Hungary with a 5-0 victory against Ujpest Dozsa, but didn't look too secure in beating Basle (1-1, 3-1).

Fortune smiled on them too as they grabbed a late disputed penalty in Italy to hang on against Milan (4-1, 1-3) and when they took on Spanish rivals Barcelona in the quarter finals the Catalans were entering the crisis weeks which began when Cruyff was sent off in the league, and later saw Neeskens, Marcial and Rexach heavily fined for breaking retiro.

Bilbao's semi-final victory was hardly the stuff of which dreams are made. In Belgium they found RWD Molenbeek far from their best, and took advantage by coming forward and scoring through Igancio Churruca after 28 minutes. Teugels and Wellens forced two good saves from Jose Angel Iribar before half-time, but it wasn't until four minutes from the end that Teugels, who had earlier missed a penalty, scored the equaliser.

RWD threw themselves forward in the second leg in Spain, and this time Bilbao were content to contain and go through on the away goal.

Looking at Juventus and Bilbao, their seems an obvious gap in class. If they each have fine veteran goalkeepers in Zoff and Iribar, there is no doubt the Italians have much the better defensive unit. If there is still a question mark against sweeper Gaetano Scirea, he is surrounded by hard enough men such as Franco Morini to more than make up. And in Marco Tardelli and Antonello Cuccureddu Juventus are far more adept and

win

Probable teams

Anderlecht: Jan Ruiter — Gilbert van Binst, Hugo Broos, Erwin van den Daele (Capt), Jean Thissen — Ludo Coeck, Jean Dockx, Francois van der Elst, Arie Haan — Peter Ressel, Rob Rensenbrink. Coach: Raymond Goethals.

Hamburg: Rudo Kargus — Manfred Kaltz Peter Nogly, Hans-Jürgen Ripp, Peter Hidien — Klaus Memering, Kluaz Zaczyk, Felix Magath — Arno Steffenhagen, Willi Reimann, Georg Volkert (Capt). Coach: Kuno Klötzer.

CUP-WINNERS' CUP — Semi finals

First legs

Atletico Madrid 3 (Cano 51 and 68, Leal 60)
Hamburg 1 (Magath 55)
HT: 0-0. Att: 50,000

Napoli 1 (Bruscolotti 81)
Anderlecht 0
HT: 0-0. Att: 90,000

Second legs

Anderlecht 2 (Thissen 29, van der Elst 51)
Napoli 0
HT: 1-0. Att: 38,000
Anderlecht 2-1 on agg

Hamburg 3 (Kaltz 19, Reimann 22, Keller 27)
Atletico Madrid 0
HT: 3-0. Att: 61,000
Hamburg 4-3 on agg

Causio of Juventus

VENTUS

CUP FINAL PREVIEWS BY KEIR RADNEDGE

experienced at breaking swiftly from defence.

In midfield they will meet resistance, mainly from the hard-working Angel Villar, but it's hard to find many more intimidating partnerships than Giuseppe Furino and Romeo Benetti.

Bilbao have the experience of Francisco Rojo and the skill of Ignacio Churruca up front to provide the openings for Dani, but once more Juventus seem to have the more powerful guns. There's Bettega for a start, who's been scoring like clockwork all season, and if Roberto Boninsegna, at 33, was a short-term signing last summer, he's more than justified the decision to release Pietro Anastasi.

Also, of course, Juve have the unpredictable skills and flair of Causio and the much deeper first-team squad from which to select one team ideal for the home leg, another just right for a war of attrition away.

Juve seem to have everything going for them. The only problem will be if domestic concerns — as I write they are level at the top with Torino with just four games to go — cause them to take their minds off the job in hand.

Juventus - Dino Zoff (capt) - Gaetano Scirea - Antonello Cuccureddu, Francesco Morini, Claudio Gentile - Giuseppe Furino, Marco Tardelli, Romeo Benetti - Franco Causio, Roberto Boninsegna, Roberto Bettega.

Bilbao - Jose Angel Iribar (capt) - Jose Maria Lasa, Agustin Guisasola, Antonio Goicoechea, Javier Escalza - Angel Rojo, Angel Villar, Javier Irureta Ignacio Churruca, Daniel Ruiz-Bazan 'Dani', Jose Francisco Rojo.

UEFA CUP — Semi finals

First legs

Juventus 4 (Cuccureddu 18, Bettega 59 and 84, Causio 69)
AEK Athens 1 (Papadopoulos 31)
HT: 1-1. Att: 60,000

RWD Molenbeek 1 (Teugels 84)
Athletic Bilbao 1 (Churruca 28)
HT: 0-1. Att: 20,000

Second legs

AEK Athens 0
Juventus 1 (Bettega 85)
HT: 0-0. Att: 29,000
Jubentus 5-1 on agg

Athletic Bilbao 0
RWD Molenbeek 0
Att: 44,000.
Bilbao on away goals; 1-1 on agg.

NEW BROOM AT HIGHBURY

Ken Goldman talks to TERRY NEIL Manager of Arsenal

A TALL, personable and quietly spoken Northern Irishman who has taken over the leadership of arguably England's greatest club and has become over the last months one of the most controversial managers of the season. In having already called his players "morons" and said that they "couldn't beat a row of dustbins" Terry Neil, manager of Arsenal, has really hit the headlines and has sounded a battle knell along Highbury's marble halls.

In recent months he has transferred John Radford to West Ham, Eddie Kelly to Queens Park Rangers, Alex Cropley to Aston Villa, Alan Ball to Southampton and Peter Storey to Fulham while George Armstrong the Club's senior playing member has asked for a transfer and goalkeeper Jimmy Rimmer has been rumoured as wanting to leave. To add to a momentous season Neil has purchased Malcolm MacDonald for £300,000 from Newcastle, Alan Hudson from Stoke for £200,000 and added Willie Young from Spurs and Pat Howard from Newcastle to his playing staff.

These winds of change have seen MacDonald and Stapleton strike up a deadly goal scoring partnership and Arsenal win back many of their missing spectators. However, their defence has conceded goals regularly and this has meant that a leading position obtained in the early part of the season has been transformed into a low position towards the latter end of the 1976/1977 term.

Terry Neil is philosophical about this and about football life as a manager in general. He is a lively companion and ready, willing and able to talk about his views on the game. I spoke to him recently about such views and he told me: "I believe strongly in not being frightened of losing. This governs the way I prepare my teams to play so that we always try to work to our strength and play our own game rather than fear the opposition. Many people want to play attractive, attacking football but frequently it is a question of who is most prepared to risk it. I have always wanted to retain my own ideas and philosophies and in that way I feel I can influence the people around me towards my own view. Certainly once you go around being frightened of losing you have already started on the downward slippery slopes."

This may in some way explain the tendency of Neil to criticise his players when things are not going as he would wish and perhaps when the players show less than his zest for the game. While discussing his views he added: "I carry over my views to the players who I want to encourage to approach the game in the same way that I do with the desire being that they play to their full potential and enjoy the game. The surprising, and disappointing, thing is how many players nowadays just do not enjoy playing and training, while on the contrary I have always felt that it was wonderful just to be involved. Players ought to work hard at their skills and own particular strengths in order to be able to produce them in match situations."

Personal judgement

I posed the question that I thought that both at Tottenham and at Arsenal, his defence was conceding goals because of the tendency to have an all out attack. He answered me by saying: "The style of play which I favour is to have everyone attack when the time is right, including full backs, but of course defenders must principally have the ability to defend." He also asked me if I realised that almost every one of his players had scored already in the season, with the exception of Jimmy Rimmer, the goalkeeper and I had to agree that that was right.

It was obvious that the transfer market played an important role in his life and I asked Terry Neil about the problems that it posed. He replied: "I consider the transfer market is a necessity but if one is not careful it can become a necessary evil. A fresh player sometimes helps a club and vice versa, but it is all a matter of personal judgement. Some players are worth having at one price but not at a higher price, although of course if you have the money to spend it becomes an easier decision. In this respect, as in others, I consider I am not a gambler but I do believe in having a positive attitude. If I have a problem I go out and attack rather than shy away from it."

We moved on to the relationship between the Manager and his Chairman and other Directors. This again led to some interesting views. Neil said: "It is important for Directors to be sympathetic towards the Managers' views, and the relationship between the Manager and Chairman is vitally important. Directors should try to encourage and create mutual respect and a Manager will then of course enjoy working for the Board and as a result the whole club will naturally benefit. Likewise the Manager must inform his Directors what he is trying to achieve and how he proposes to go about doing it while also keeping them in touch with every day matters such as injuries and player problems."

Neil has perhaps a refreshing attitude towards the media and not so long ago I heard him say to reporters after a bad home defeat: "I will certainly not complain about anything you write today." As if to underline this he told me "I believe that relationships with the media are extremely important. I think that they do a good job by and large but of course some people's standards are higher than others. In particular, the media brings football to the public and the public are the important people. This is borne out because the public already have a say in professional football which they particularly express by staying away. We in the game have to provide the appropriate stimulus and then the people will come and watch the various teams play."

Wrong decision

With Arsenal sometimes falling foul of referees this season, I put this problem to him and he stated: "It is important to maintain the right type of relationships with referees. I consider that referees have a very hard job and the players do not make it any easier. I try to tell my players that they must start with the attitude that accepts that even if the referee makes the wrong decision by the laws of the game it is a right one and therefore referees are quite right to clamp down on dissent, and the players must accept this. I would like to point out that I certainly do not give my players sympathy if they are booked for dissent and I consider that it is necessary to help referees rather than criticise them."

Finally, I reminded the Arsenal Manager that he, at one time, was both a player manager with a league club and also an international manager and asked what the differences were. After a short pause, the lilting Irish accent answered me; "There are considerable differences between being a Manager and a player/manager and a manager and an international manager. Initially, the transition from player to player/manager was very helpful to me as I was fit and I could compete with other players and not ask them to do something that I could not.

"At the same time I was able to learn a considerable amount of the managers job. I think it is virtually impossible to carry on this position for any length of time and it is important to know when to bow out. You cannot recommend anybody to involve themselves in the job because it is simply a matter of the personality of the man involved and the individual circumstances of the job.

"The position of international manager is altogether different. The game at that level is played at a slower pace and so of course is the preparation. You only have the players available for a short time and you must find a balance between organising them and bring out their best individual talents.

"It is much easier when you have your own players on the day to day basis, and you can get your ideas over to them during a gradual period of time. For the international manager it is essential to try to keep the same blend together for as long as possible in order to obtain the best results."

Whether or not Arsenal and Terry Neil hit the heights in coming seasons the one thing that is abundantly clear is that a chat to Terry Neil will always be an interesting and stimulating occasion.

From ERIC WEIL in Argentina

A photo taken of the Mar del Plata central beaches during the holiday season with the two giant casinos in the background.

Mar del Plata too cold for Brazilians!

THE CHOICE of Mar del Plata — 400 km south of Buenos Aires on the Atlantic coast — as a World Cup venue was uncertain for some time, because June (when the World Cup finals will be played) is one of the coldest months of the year there with gale force winds sometimes blowing in from the Atlantic and an average day time temperature of 10 to 14°C which frequently drops below zero at night.

That is why the Brazilians have already turned down Mar del Plata as possible headquarters during the World Cup, but local officials who went to the 1974 World Cup finals swear that winter is no colder here than a spring day in West Germany.

Weather apart, Mar del Plata has distinct advantages over any other venue in Argentina. Being one of the largest seaside resorts in the world — Mar del Plata claims to be the largest — with a stable population of 400,000 which easily increases to a million during the holiday season, it has all the facilities to house more fans than are likely to arrive to see one of the four-country first round groups played there.

Boasts

Mar del Plata boasts of over a 1,000 hotels (including some of the most modern (with 29,000 rooms and 72,000 beds and there are any number of boarding houses, flats and villas to let which absorb the rest of the annual summer intake. Furthermore, the city which has kilometres of beaches, various thriving local industries apart from tourism (being well known for its knitwear), boasts of 390 restaurants, 860 bar and tea rooms, 25 cinemas, 20 theatres, 40 night clubs and what claims to be the largest casino in the world. Possibly it is, housed in two big buildings on the sea front with 114 roulette and 58 other gaming tables. But let's get back to the World Cup.

During winter all this extra living space is mostly empty except for a few thousand gamblers lured here by the casino every weekend. Many of the shops, hotels and restaurants close down, but they say they will mostly all open for the World Cup. Mar del Plata also has a direct link with a television relay satellite ground station in Balcarce only 40 km away. The station is equipped to handle the simultaneous relay of two matches and it expects to have a third circuit available by the time the World Cup starts.

With nothing to worry about regarding accommodation and television requirements, the main concern has been the building of a stadium and this is now halfway finished and is expected to be ready for use by the end of the year.

The stadium is being built at the municipal park some five kilometres from the centre of the city, but is easily reached by car along the wide Independencia avenue in about 10 minutes. Several small stadiums for various sports already exist at the park and part of the scheme is to remodel the park which, Mar del Plata hopes, will leave it with an ultra-modern sports complex after the World Cup.

The stadium will hold 45,000 comfortably (with about 20,000 seated) and one of its four stands, which will house officials and press, is to be covered. Spectators will enter the stadium at the top of the stands after going up a gradually sloped ramp. This is thought to be the best method to avoid crowd congestion and possible avalanches. Officials, press and other media enter by a separate ramp. Four hundred desks for journalists are planned in the stand, many with their own telephone and some with TV. There will also be 75 cabins for TV and radio commentators apart from a press room with 40 long distance phones and 10 local lines, 16 telex lines and 24 telex perforators.

The playing area is four-and-a-half metres below ground level, specially prepared for rapid drainage and with underground pipes for watering. It is surrounded by a moat with water — a special FIFA requirement for Argentina.

The teams enter by separate entrances below ground level leading to completely independent changing rooms, bathrooms, first aid centres and gymnasiums for warming up so that the rivals do not see each other until they actually enter the field by separate tunnels.

A covered car park for 300 cars for officials and press, another open car park for 400 cars, both next to the stadium, plus parking space for 3000 cars nearby will take care of the traffic which will be able to reach the stadium by three main avenues once paving of several earth roads is completed.

And, because Argentine weather is not very stable at the best of times, it could just happen (not for the first time) that a freak summer in June will give the fans an agreeable fortnight on the seaside with all the holiday trappings.

The BRIAN GLANVILLE column

Solti affair: CORRUPTION GOES ROUND AND ROUND!

The corruption goes round and round. On March 13 last, we published, in the SUNDAY TIMES, an agreement between Twente Enschede of Holland and Juventus, dated January, 1971, and signed on behalf of Juventus by . . . none other than our old friend Deszo Solti, who, Juventus always claimed, had nothing whatsoever to do with them.

"*Brian,*" said Giampiero Boniperti, President of Juventus, when I presented him in April, 1974, with the facts about Solti's attempt to bribe Portugal's referee Lobo to favour Juventus against Derby County, "*se ci sono questi pazzi in giro.*" If there are these lunatics going around. . .

The implication was that Solti had been "going around" trying to bribe referees to favour Juventus on his own behalf. If you believe that, as the Duke of Wellington once said to a man who addressed him as Mr. Smith, you will believe anything.

Solti had gone to Enschede on behalf of Juventus to try to persuade the Dutch club to switch dates in a European Fairs Cup tie so that Juve could play the second leg at home. Twente refused; and were later mortified and outraged by the refereeing of another old friend of ours, Ortiz de Mendibil, the Spaniard who blighted Liverpool's life in the 1965 European Cup semi-finals, in Turin.

Meanwhile, Solti was foolish enough for once to sign a letter; as the official representative of Juventus. Game, set and match, you might think, though I shall believe that, knowing UEFA as alas I do, when I see it. Everybody knows who "ran" Solti; everyone in Italian football, that is to say, and many in European football, too. Everybody knows who "ran" him when he worked — officially, as it happens — in all those golden, grasping years for Inter, of Milan.

Proving it, of course, is something else again. Needless to say, there is a great deal more that Keith Botsford and I have unearthed about the Solti-Lobo Affair which we long to print, but are held back for lack of absolutely conclusive evidence. In Solti's signed statement on Twente Enschede's writing paper, we have, however, provided concrete evidence, and it will be interesting to watch how UEFA and the Italians wriggle and writhe to evade it.

If only they were not helped by the shabby indifference, the almost criminal passivity, of guiltless Associations which prefer to see their member clubs exploited and cheated rather than act. The explanation is not as remote as it appears. UEFA is a cosy club for officials, the source of agreeable trips, comfortable hotels, extensive foreign travel, as they say.

How pleasant, amiable and urbane all those officials and office-holders appear when you meet them over a good dinner in the Crillon, in Paris, or the Atlantis, in Zurich! Why make waves? Why rock the boat? Why jeopardise one's own cosy privileges, just for the sake of one's constituent clubs?

Oh, yes, gentlemen; this is how it works, and not only, alas, in UEFA. Bribes *have* been given and taken, and not merely to and by referees, but many a football delegate doesn't need to be bribed at all. He simply prefers the comfortable life. As, indeed, do the bought and neutered pundits of the Italian football Press.

There is, I suppose, such a thing as anti-television. We saw it — those of us who did not quickly switch off — on the occasion of that non-event in March, the conferring of the Professional Footballers' Association awards. Very fittingly, the occasion — if that is the word — was not even attended by Andy Gray, who happened to have won, and quite deservedly (pace his drab show in the League Cup Final) both awards, the young player's and the senior player's.

Tarted up in their pleats and tuxedos, liberally surrounded by their faceless, placeless, hangers-on, such occasions show our professional footballers at their least endearing, and even at their most pathetic. Television can make nothing of such a non-event; the pre-dinner interviews must be as embarrassing for Moore and Davies (if television interviewers can be embarrassed, which is debatable) as they are for the viewers.

Blackburn Rovers goalkeeper Paul Bradshaw embraces the ball as he dives to foil Fulham number 10 Teddy Maybank in a Second Division match at Craven Cottage.

This year, the PFA, who tend to give their award, God help us, to the likes of Norman Hunter, imported a comic clergyman, who really had to be seen and heard to be believed. There was, I suppose, something almost endearing about the provincial gormlessness of his speech, with its awful puns and feeble jokes (an exception must be made for one: that at Bury, his club, the crowd changes are announced to the players), the fine anachronism of his whole performance. Trite and old fashioned it might have been, Ooop for 1Coop may have been, so to speak, written all over it, but at least it made no pretensions at metropolitan sophistication.

I'M glad things have worked out more happily for Teddy Maybank, whose successful loan to Fulham has now culminated in a definitive transfer to them from Chelsea. When I spoke to him at Stamford Bridge, he was at particular pains to stress his gratitude to all those who had helped him, whether they be schoolmasters, coaches, or his parents; a pleasantly unusual attitude in a contemporary player.

I, and surely football at large, could well have done without the whole, embarrassing proceeding.

WHILE on the subject of television interviewing, a word of congratulation to John Motson, who has actually been asking probing questions and following up the answers, on the BBC; a lesson to those smoothies for all seasons who are so used now to being bland and anodyne that they simply do not know what an objective interview is.

We have, thank goodness, for long been spared the sycophantic "questioning" of David Coleman, whose solecisms are now being pilloried issue by issue in the correspondence columns of PRIVATE EYE. I recall an occasion, after Scotland had won an international match at Hampden, when, with a flattering smile, he told Willy Ormond, the Scottish manager, "Everywhere I looked, there was quality!"

Ormond, honest little fellow that he is, replied seriously that he couldn't agree with this, David; there were several positions with which he had been not at all satisfied.

WHEN, in a recent article in the SUNDAY TIMES, I deplored the attitude of certain school coaches towards the game and to their pupils, it brought me a large correspondence. Some schools, coaches and officials angrily denied that negative, destructive practices were widespread. Unfortunately, enough evidence arrived from places as far apart as Derbyshire, Hertfordshire and London to show that, as one has always heard and believed, schools and boys' club football is full of coaches and teachers who inhibit their pupils from playing, place an insanely heavy emphasis on competition, and often encourage rough play.

One F.A. coach from the North Midlands informed me that he watched a game in which, his nine year old son having beaten his man on the wing, the master in charge of the opposing team rushed down the touchline exhorting his full-back, "kick him, kick him?"

News from Italy by Keir Radnedge

CESENA UPSET MANY PEOPLE

CESENA, already certainties for relegation, upset a lot of people when they threatened to put out the youth team in a vital away match against fellow strugglers Bologna.

The reason was anger after the 0-0 draw with Inter in San Siro, that referee Paolo Bergamo had turned down a penalty appeal when Giacinto Facchetti tripped centre-forward Gianluca De Ponti.

Not only that, but Bergamo booked De Ponti for acting!

Cesena director Gastone Fantini said: "Too many times we have used the proper channels to try to obtain justice – and always in vain. This season Cesena have been denied at least five penalties which would have been vital to help keep us up.

"We've protested, but they still send us referees whose decisions – made in good faith, I suppose – further damage our chances of hanging on.

"Certainly we'll lose the chance of two more points if we send out the youth team at Bologna – but things could hardly be any worse than they are now."

In the end reason prevailed and Cesena went out with their first team to gain a 0-0 draw. The match, which saw Bologna midfielder Adelmo Paris sent off for dissent in the last minute, was played in a stadium surrounded by a cordon of riot police.

Yet despite the riots which had upset the city for several days, there was no trouble.

Bologna's first-team have been promised a £200,000 share-out if they stay up. The next week they moved out of the bottom three with a 1-1 draw away to Milan and then were held at home again by relegation-threatened Catanzaro.

Catanzaro, however, are looking most likely to join Cesena in Serie B next season. Cesena have 13 points, Catanzaro 15. Then come Sampdoria and Foggia on 17, with Bologna easing a point ahead after two-goal Stefano Chiodi brought a surprise 2-0 win away to Genoa.

War of the knife goes on...

THE WAR to the knife continues at the top of the first division — with Juventus hanging on narrowly to their one-point lead over Torino with a 1-1 draw against the champions.

It was a good point for Juve, who haven't been getting the best of the Turin derbies in the past few years.

A capacity 70,000 crowd paying a record £182,000 saw Torino dominate the first half after going a goal behind in 13 minutes to Franco Causio. Paolino Pulici hit the equaliser two minutes later and after that it was one-way traffic.

Yet the second half saw a complete turnaround. Now it was Juventus pushing forward, probing relentlessly and coming close to a winner. Twice Causio hit the bar, once Roberto Boninsegna had similar bad luck and at the end Torino coach Gigi Radice was happy with a point.

If Juventus can boast the best attack in the league — 37 goals from 23 games! — Torino still have the best defence with only 12 goals conceded. Torino also have the better goal difference with 36 goals scored, but lately don't seem to have been firing on all cylinders.

Back pass

In fact, away to Inter a few weeks before, the only goal was a sixth-minute own goal from Graziani Bini, who smashed a back pass beyond Ivano Bordon. A bad start for Bini who, with Giacinto Facchetti out injured, was desperate to back up his claim that he is Inter's best *libero* who caught the eye. Renato Zaccarelli was switched from midfield because of injuries to Vittorio Caporale and Luigi Danova and had Radice comparing him with Franz Beckenbauer after a very tidy display.

There was another own goal in the 'other' match — Juventus' 2-1 win over Milan. This time it wasn't decisive, though Gaetano Scirea was even quicker to beat his own goalkeeper, Dino Zoff — after just three minutes.

Torino's win over Inter was marred by the attack on president Orfeo Pianelli's car by a group of Inter hooligans. Much worse however came three days later when Torino vice-president Giuseppe Navone became the latest victim of the "Italian crime" — kidnapping. Navone, who is 71, was taken at gunpoint by three men as he arrived at a cinema he owns.

Despite fears that players or members of their families might be the next target, Torino went ahead with their home game against Perugia and won 2-1 — not without controversy, for Perugia protested bitterly at both Torino goals.

The first, after only three minutes, was scored by Pulici after Francesco Graziani collided with goalkeeper Nello Malizia as he gathered the ball.

Malizia hurt his arm and had to be replaced by 19-year-old Rossano Pinto, a debut boy who kept his goal intact until the 69th minute when Roberto Salvadori headed in a free kick — which Perugia felt should have been awarded the other way — taken by Claudio Sala.

That win brought Torino level with Juventus, who were held 0-0 in Verona. This was a game with controversy on and off the pitch. The first problem was discovered before the game, when a policeman noticed a live hand grenade on the running track round the pitch.

Object

It was decided to cover the object with foam rubber and explode it after the game — a course of action which horrified fan club officials when they learned of it later. The game held its own explosion one minute from the end. Giancarlo Zigoni reached a long pass at the by-line (or did he?) and crossed for Carlo Petrini to head past Zoff. Referee Alberto Michelotti ruled that the ball had crossed the line before Zigoni centred. In the melee that followed Petrini and Juventus defender Antonello Cuccureddu were sent off.

Zigoni was involved in trouble during the teams' game earlier in the season. He collapsed as the teams walked off at half-time and claimed he had been hit by a bottle. The FIGC didn't believe him and set up an inquiry into whether Zigoni and a couple of team-mates had deliberately given false evidence at a disciplinary commission. The case was dismissed for lack of evidence.

Juventus moved back a point clear the next week, beating Cesena 3-2 while Torino were held 0-0 away to Napoli. It's 23 years since Torino last won in the Fuorigrotta — and that dropped point plus the derby stalemate the following week could prove vital in deciding the championship race.

MAZZOLA TO QUIT

IT LOOKS more likely that both Gianni Rivera and Sandro Mazzola will retire at the season's end — Rivera to become president of Milan, Mazzola to become executive director at Internazionale.

Certainly the derby was billed as their last. The only pity was that the game — the 178th Milanese derby — didn't live up to all the ballyhoo and finished 0-0.

Rivera was the best player on the field and provoked this comment from former Inter star Mariolino Corso: "I can understand why Rivera wants to get out, having to play in a team like that. But honestly, it's ridiculous that a player like Gianni should pack up. He's one of the few players around who understand the game."

Corso, you may think, is not one of the most likely people to praise anything or anyone at Milan. But he could soon be joining them in the youth sector, having left a similar post at Inter some time ago.

Inter, for their part, are planning a mini revolution when Mazzola moves upstairs. Giancarlo Beltrami, the 40-year-old general manager at *Serie B* Como is primed for a similar job, with Sampdoria's Eugenio Bersellini favourite to replace Beppe Chiappella as coach. Beltrami was once a Milan colleague of Gigi Radice and Giovanni Trapattoni, but he's made much more of a mark as an administrator than as a player.

Youth coach Enea Maszero, who has twice stepped in as caretaker manager of the senior squad, is also to be given his cards. Inter president Ivanoe Fraizzoli is determined that Inter shall pay more attention to developing their own players and less on the lottery of the transfer market.

Pietro Anastasi, a fiasco of a purchase, could be on his way this summer after just one season and team spirit is not what it might be. Defender Gabriele Oriali spoke out before the 0-0 draw with Cesena, saying: "If Chiappella chose only the players in form for this game, Ivano Bordon, our goalkeeper, would be the only player to line up."

Inter are fifth after losing 2-1 to Lazio, while Milan are 11th — still just three points above the relegation zone.

Giancarlo Antognoni of Fiorentina, back in action after injury.

Fiorentina?

WE HAVEN'T made much mention this season of Fiorentina. On the other hand, Fiorentina haven't achieved much either.

But they have now crept into fourth place in the table, and they are, after all, one of Italy's representatives in Europe — in the Mitropa Cup.

The Mitropa is played this season between Fiorentina, Vasas of Budapest, Sparta Prague and Vojvodina Novisad and at the moment it's Vasas who are best placed. Fiorentina's chance of catching them was upset by the 2-0 defeat in a bad-tempered defeat by Sparta in Prague.

However, on Fiorentina's behalf, it must be said that they were without seven first-teamers — Moreno Roggi, Marco Rossinelli, Mauro Della Martira, Domenico Caso, Claudio Desolati and Steno Gola and Giuliano Bertarelli who had been injured in the previous Sunday's 2-1 win over Verona. Also of course, car crash victim Vincenzo Guerini has been out for over a year and though he wants to play again, it's doubtful whether he will ever realise his early potential.

There were more problems to come. Midfielder Enio Pellegrini was sent off 20 minutes from the end in Prague and both Giancarlo Casarsa, at 23 one of the veterans of the team, and Giancarlo Antognoni, were injured.

Coach Carlo Mazzone was furious: "What did Sparta think this was?" he demanded furiously. "A World Cup-tie?"

Newcomers

Antognoni joined the casualty list for the next league match, away to Catanzaro, breaking a run of 60 consecutive games. But despite fielding nine reserves, the *Viola* still won 1-0 thanks to a goal from 20-year-old Sante Crepaldi, one of three newcomers, and making his debut at centre forward.

The overall performance was enough to restore hope in Florence that perhaps a generation of young players are coming through again just as in the late sixties when the so-called "Fiorentina-baby" went on to win the 1969 league title.

Ironically the next week — with Rossinelli, Casarsa and Antognoni back — Fiorentina went down 2-1 at home to Genoa. It was Genoa's first win in Florence for 39 years!

European Cup run by Zurich —remarkable

by Arthur Rotmil

THERE is a certain curious analogy between the soccer fortunes of England and Switzerland this season. Their national sides came under severe criticism at home, following recent failures in World Cup qualifying matches. In both countries there was a wave of recrimination, self doubt and frankly condemnation of the playing standards.

Yet, strangely, at the same time their leading clubs have achieved splendid successes at international level to confound the spate of criticism of their football. In England it was Liverpool — in Switzerland, the FC Zürich, who both reached the semi-finals of the coveted European Cup.

The fine run of Zürich was quite remarkable, considering their limited potential. Admittedly, they have had some luck in the draw for the Second Round being pitted against the modest Finnish champions TPS Turku, or even in the quarter-finals against, on paper, the weakest opposition in Dynamo Dresden. But the Swiss did after all remove Glasgow Rangers in the First Round and at that time the famous Scottish club who last season won the "treble" (League, Cup and League Cup), at home, were still firing on all cylinders.

Thus, for the third time a Swiss club has reached the last four in the European Cup — previously Young Boys of Bern (1959) and Zürich themselves (1964). Their pairing with Liverpool in the semi-final aroused such tremendous interest, that there was even talk of switching the home leg to Basel, whose St. Jakob stadium has a capacity of 60,000 as against the 28,500 on their own Letzigrund in Zürich. But the management decided to keep faith with their supporters and also hoped to make the most of real ground advantage.

The bitter pills they had to swallow before the Liverpool tie were first the absence of their captain Köbi Kuhn who suffered pulled ligaments. Then the suspension of their leading goalscorer Franco Cucinotta. After two cautions in previous games, he was banned for one European Cup match.

And they certainly missed both these players in the home leg. Cucinotta, born in Sicily (Italy), came to Switzerland 16 years ago. He played as a junior for Villeneuve, then for Montreux, Chenois and Sion, before joining Zürich this season.

With 16 goals in 19 league matches to his credit he was way ahead in the scorers list and in six European Cup games Cucinotta hit five goals. From this can be seen just what his absence meant to the Swiss champions.

Freedom

Away from the playing fields the 12th of March will go down as an "historic" date in Swiss football. On that day the Swiss footballers gained unexpectedly their freedom of contract and other concessions. Following the Supreme Court's decision in the famous "Perroud-affair", that no club may hold a player against his will after his contract has expired, the SFV (F.A.) decided to amend some of its most conservative rules as follows:

1. All transfers will in future only be arranged between the player whose contract has ceased and the new club which is willing to sign him. The old club will be paid compensation to be agreed with the new club. But if an agreement cannot be reached, then a special commission appointed by the League will decide on the size of the fee. Clubs who fail to pay the fixed compensation, within the specified time limit, will be punished by having eight points deducted from the League table total.

2. There will no longer be a limit on the actual transfer fee.

3. The existing ceiling on the maximum wage has been abolished.

4. The rule which up till now stipulated that every Swiss-born footballer in the National League must have a job outside the game, has now been waived.

Obviously these regulations have opened the door to full time professionalism, for so long regarded in Switzerland as economically not viable. That such rules have been introduced by the SFV is all the more surprising since there is no Players' Union in this country!

Only recently have the top footballers here founded, what they themselves cautiously call, an "Association". And it is not even certain as yet, whether this body will be recognised officially by the clubs, or by the SFV.

In the championship Servette and FC Zürich continued their duel at the top, which of course is only of relative value in view of the new method of deciding the title. At the end of April the top six clubs will form a pool in which they will play against each other (having taken half the points total with them!), home and away, to determine the new champions. The bottom six clubs will also play off, with the last two being relegated.

The FC Zurich ground.

from PETER BILLS, BELGIUM

Raoul Lambert of FC Bruges.

Happy Bruges but... poor Lambert

IT'S ironic but true — Club Bruges have had one of their best seasons ever and Raoul Lambert has had a miserable time. Strange but true because Belgian international Lambert, known throughout Europe as one of Belgian football's best ever statesmen, has been dogged by injury.

Lambert has had a series of niggling thigh and hamstring injuries that have severely restricted his activities in senior level soccer. And Bruges' European Cup quarter final defeat at the hands of the German Champions, Borussia Moenchoen Gladbach was the final straw for Lambert.

The genial 32 year-old Belgian admits sadly: "It could have been my last chance of playing in a European Cup winning side. If that is so, of course I am disappointed. But I have the memories of Belgian Cup Final football and a UEFA Cup final medal for our match with Liverpool last season. So I have had a great time in the game."

Nevertheless, it has been a frustrating campaign for Lambert. While Bruges led the Belgian League table into the final run-in, Lambert was fighting his latest hamstring injury in a bid to play in the European Cup match against Borussia.

The trouble had started during the pre-match warm-up in Germany. Lambert pulled a hamstring only minutes before the game began and had a desperate fight to regain fitness in time for the second leg. Despite that, however, Bruges pulled off the result of the round by getting a 2-2 draw in Germany.

When Lambert reported fit for the return, all seemed set fair for Bruges to progress to the semi-finals. But it didn't have a happy ending. Lambert pulled a muscle again after only 15 minutes of the return and hobbled off soon after.

Minutes

Despite that, however, Bruges seemed to be on their way through. They needed only a goalless draw to get through and looked like getting it until eight minutes from time. Then, Borussia scored the only goal of the game and poor Bruges were out.

Lambert admits: "It is much harder for me these days especially with injuries. I am now 32 but I would like to play for two more years before retiring. I believe I can play for that time and if we retain the Belgian League title this year, maybe I can look again at the European Cup for one last time next winter. That would be a marvellous climax."

Lambert is critical of the lack of progress in Belgian international football, particularly after the World Cup defeat by Holland in Antwerp.

"Other countries have developed far better than Belgium," he says. "It is a pity but it is a fact. There is more man to man marking in European football these days and we in Belgium, don't like that.

"We use the zone marking system and that is our problem — we have not changed. When we meet teams and other countries who use the man to man system, we cannot overcome it.

"It won't happen here — we won't change over to that system. We cannot develop another system because it would take far too long to adapt to. I prefer the zone defence, especially when you have a quick Number 9 or No. 10. Then you can exploit it but that, of course, is perhaps why other countries do not use it so much.

"It is easier to score goals against and although it gives better entertainment, it does not always mean you win every match."

Lambert may have a happy end to his season after all. Bruges were four points clear at the top of the Belgian League table with seven games left. Only RWD Molenbeek and Anderlecht held any hopes of stopping Bruges retaining their title.

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Australia	4	1	1	2	5	6
Austria	3	1	1	1	5	5
Bulgaria	16	4	3	9	28	33
Brazil	1	0	1	0	0	0
Cyprus	5	3	1	1	9	7
Czechoslovakia	1	0	0	1	0	4
Denmark	5	1	1	3	9	15
Egypt (U.A.R)	8	3	2	3	11	11
England	2	0	0	2	0	5
Ethiopia	2	2	0	0	6	3
Finland	2	1	1	0	3	2
France	4	0	1	3	4	14
Germany (West)	5	0	2	3	5	11
Holland	1	0	0	1	0	5
Hungary	2	0	1	1	2	12
Ireland (North)	2	1	0	1	2	3
Israel	6	3	1	2	9	7
Italy	3	1	0	2	4	8
Libya	1	1	0	0	4	0
Malta	4	2	1	1	7	3
Mexico	2	0	1	1	1	2
Palestine	2	2	0	0	4	1
Poland	4	2	0	2	7	7
Portugal	2	1	1	0	6	4
Rumania	14	0	5	9	16	40
Spain	4	0	1	3	4	48
Switzerland	4	1	0	3	4	4
Syria	2	2	0	0	12	0
Turkey	5	2	0	3	7	8
U.S.S.R.	4	0	0	4	2	12
Wales	2	1	0	1	3	4
Yugoslavia	14	2	1	11	13	44
Totals	147	38	27	72	189	287

Greeks long history

International Microscope by ERIC BATTY

LIKE several other countries the Greeks fielded a national team long before they had a national association. In their case, with Panathinaikos, first known as Panhellenic, formed in 1908, Olympiakos (Piraeus) formed in 1914 and AEK Athlitiki Enosis Konstaninoppulition following in 1924, they even played international football before their big clubs saw the light of day.

With Greece the hosts for the 1906 Olympic Games competition, Greece entered a soccer team in the football tournament and actually reached the final . . . where they were thrashed 9-0 by Denmark.

Then for the 1920 competition, the Greeks again raised an Olympics side, this time beaten by the same 9-0 (against Sweden) but in the first round. Then in 1926 came the F.A., or Elliniki Podosfeiriki Osmospondia as it is known in Greek, which is one of the more complex European languages.

Greece's only success since that 1906 Olympics final appearance was in the European Cup in which Panathinaikos reached the final at Wembley in 1971. It might be said that they had a relatively easy path to the final but nevertheless they got there, and though Ajax played very cautiously, playing tactical football to make sure of their first European success, they beat the Greeks then managed by Ferenc Puskas, by only 2-0.

Two of the most successful players Greece has yet produced played for Panathinaikos in that final: Dimitrios Domazos and Antonis Aontoniadis. The last names was a centre forward, standing 6ft 4in and a gangling player built somewhat like the former Benfica and Portugal star Torres, and as might be expected he was exceptionally good in the air. During his club's European Cup campaign, Antoniadis scored ten goals.

Dimitrios Domazos is still playing and still a star. At 33, with 44 caps behind him he probably thought his international career was over, but after the Greeks had tried to build a new team based on young players, new manager Lakis Petropoulos who almost steered Greece to the World Cup finals in one of his previous stints in charge of the national team, and now doing his third stretch, recalled him for the team v. Czechoslovakia, going on the policy of picking the men in form regardless of age.

Suspended

Domazos is a gifted and intelligent inside right, though with a slightly suspect temperament. Years ago, perhaps before he learned better, he was fouled in a game for the umpteenth time and once more the referee failed to notice it, or at least took no action.

In his frustration, Domazos pulled his shirt off and going up to the referee told him that he wasn't looking at the game so he might as well not watch it, and then proceeded to put his shirt over the referee's head.

Needless to say Domazos was suspended for that, just as countless other Greeks have been suspended for indiscipline.

Until very recently, recognising that they were dealing with the most undisciplined players in Europe, the Greek League was run on a totally different basis to that elsewhere. Three points were accorded for a win, two each for a draw, and one point went to the losing team . . . as long as they stayed on the pitch until the end of the game.

Repeatedly, players disagreeing with the referee's decisions would simply walk off the pitch in protest and even giving a consolation point to the losers if they behaved didn't stop the walk-outs.

On one occasion, Panathinaikos started their last league match with a three point lead over all their rivals, and obviously had only to 'lose properly' on the last day to collect their consolation point and win both the championship and a place in the European Cup. But even in those conditions their temperament overcame them and when a referee's penalty award went against them the players walked off . . . with coach, manager, directors and fans screaming at them to stay on the field and be sensible.

One can imagine what it was like in the bad old days when nothing was at stake. The players would leave the field when one of their colleagues was sent off or a penalty given against them. But since the FA switched to the more usual two points for a win that is commonplace in other countries there have been few disturbances. Clearly, the Greeks and their game have matured.

It helped no doubt to import foreign referees for the most important matches between championship contenders and for local derby games. The Greeks have done this for years, regularly importing referees and keeping them under wraps until the last minute.

Schachner of Austria in action against Kahsis (5) and Kritikopoulos (9) of Greece.

South American round-up conducted by Eric Weil

LONG TERM IN ARGENTINA

THE LONGEST ever Metropolitan First Division championship got under way in Argentina with 23 clubs scheduled to meet each other home and away for a total 44 games. Originally scheduled to last from February 20 to early November — with a break in June for international matches and numerous league fixtures again scheduled for midweek — the tournament will now become even more congested as provincial clubs have partially won their battle with the Argentine FA for a longer national championship to follow.

In the absence of numerous big transfer deals for lack of cash and the ban on transfers abroad of possible World Cup candidates, this has been the main talking point of the close season after a "reorganisation" of tournaments reduced the 10-year-old national championship to virtually a knock-out lasting only a month. The strong provincial clubs which do not play in the First Division rightly protested, mainly because of the impossibility of keeping a strong playing staff for such a short tournament. It has now been slightly lengthened and the Metropolitan will have to finish earlier.

Racing Club made the transfer news. Unbelievably poor last season, they have a former player from their world championship heyday (when they beat Glasgow Celtic for the title in 1967), Alfio Basile, back as coach. They captured international half Villa from Atletico Tucuman for the top price of 60 million pesos (£120,000), another international half, Daniel Killer from Rosario Central (£70,000) and former international Ruben Diaz and goalkeeper Cejas who returned to them from Spain and Brazil respectively. Their record so far is one win and one defeat in two close games in which Villa was their mainstay.

Attacking

After most clubs have played three games, River Plate top the table with maximum points. Looking for more attacking soccer (which won them the First Division and national titles in 1975), they have bought back Marchetti (after two seasons with Union) and Ortiz (the former San Lorenzo international forward who played in Brazil's Gremio last year) while also buying Pitarch, a key half in Banfield's good campaign last year. They have released Beltran (to Gimnasia La Plata) who never quite hit it off in half a season at River and also veteran winger Mas (on a free transfer) after 20 seasons with the club. Mas has gone to play in Colombia, but his many vital goals (right up to the end of last season) may be missed.

But River Plate were still having contract trouble with several leading players at press time. It hasn't shown up in their performances so far except that defender Perfumo (last year's captain) has not even turned up for training and has not yet played this season.

Numerous players had not renewed their contracts at the start of the season in search of more cash — an annual story — but clubs nipped possible strike action in the bud by forming a common front. They decided that if any club could not raise a team because the players refused to play, the others would not fulfil their fixtures either; that any players declared free agents by law after not signing new contracts within the stipulated time would not be signed by any of the other clubs; that players not turning up would be suspended without pay by their clubs.

The first to fall was Huracan's international winger Houseman with a 15-day suspension for not turning up to play in the first game. The players took the hint and there have been no major problems yet.

Last year's First Division and national champions Boca Juniors meanwhile are in the middle of the table with virtually no changes from last season — in style or lineup. Newcomers are half Carballo (from Atlanta), and forward Pavon (Platense) while they also bought Brazilian forward Becerra from Atletico Madrid (who played in Newell's Old Boys' 1974 First Division champion side), but he was killed in a car crash after only two games.

New promoted Lanus bought virtually a new team during the close season — 14 players including many experienced ones such as goalkeeper Sanchez and defender Rogel (ex Boca Juniors internationals who had been playing in Mexico) and half Pachame from Estudiantes de La Plata who thus virtually lost their last link with the team which won the Libertadores Cup three years running between 1968 and 1970. Carlos Bilardo, also in that team, had earlier handed over to Eduardo Manera (a reserve then) as coach.

Notably it has been a close season with more players returning from abroad (15) than leaving (former international forward Rodolfo Fischer, back with San Lorenzo, and goalkeeper Andrada among them) and one of them, Ortiz, has already been recalled to the national team.

The excitement may develop at the bottom of the table with three clubs instead of one due for relegation this year. Meanwhile, Boca Juniors (last year's "double" champions, Huracan (First Division runners up) and River Plate (national championship runners up) should again be in the forefront, although they will be weakened by international calls for several matches while Boca and River also have Libertadores Cup commitments. But the other day they both won league matches with reserves, while resting first teamers for their Libertadores Cup clash three days later.

Bonuses

BRAZIL'S international defender Marinho signed a contract with Rio de Janeiro's Fluminense which made him one of the best paid players in the country. On top of the signing-on fee of 69,000 dollars, he was reported to be receiving a monthly salary of 3,100 dollars during the first year and 3,800 during the second as well as 380 dollars per match apart from bonuses. It is believed that only Rivelino (Fluminense), Zico (Flamengo), Paulo Cesar (Botafogo) and Leao (Palmeiras) receive similar salaries in Brazil.

Another international, half Paulo Cesar Carpegiani (who was in the 1974 World Cup squad), was transferred from national champions Internacional de Porto Alegre to Rio's Flamengo for 400,000 dollars. He was reported to be getting 24,000 dollars signing on fee and a 4,000 dollar monthly salary plus bonuses.

A former Brazilian international forward, Jairzinho, was due to play for Venezuelan champoins Portuguesa this season, according to that club's officials.

VENEZUELA'S professional league has a new club this year, Barquisimeto, who have already signed five Argentine First Division players and expect to sign a winger from Colombia as well.

IN URUGUAY, the season has just started at press time with the major league instead of the more important First Division championship. The change around was decided as international players were still engaged in World Cup games and not available for their clubs.

IN CHILE, also, 18 first and 18 second division clubs are playing in a preparatory tournament for the Chile Cup in sections (and they can substitute as many as six players during a game to prepare their teams) while internationals are not playing for their clubs. But a powerful reason for the tournament is to keep football pools going until the First Division starts in April.

PERU'S has started with a zonal championship (for the first time) in which the 16 First Division clubs are divided into two zones, the winners of which play off for the national title with the champions and vice champions of the First Division to be played later. After five matches, unfancied Colegio Nacional Iquitos and Atletico Chalaco top their respective sections, but leading clubs will be without their international players until the end of March when World Cup preliminary group play (stage one) finishes in South America.

COLOMBIA'S "Opening" Championship, the first of two comprising the season, has started with internationals not playing for their clubs (for reasons stated above) and after three games, Junior is the only one of 14 clubs with full points.

Manchester United manager Tommy Docherty (right) embraces Stuart Houston after his club had won through to the FA Cup Final.

Will Paisley be Britain's top manager?

SOCCER NOTEBOOK by Eric Thornton

OLD JOE SMITH, famous international cup star and cup-winning manager, never tired of emphasising to me it was no good any club having top class players if it hadn't had the good sense to engage the right man to handle them.

I've no doubt that was true in his four decades on both sides of the war, and everybody now connected officially with the game backs the opinion by merely pointing to five of today's leading teams — Liverpool, Ipswich Town, Manchester United, Leeds United and Manchester City.

That is a factor which immediately spotlights at least some of the men who could once more line up for the title of Britain's top manager. I give you Bob Paisley, Tommy Docherty, Jimmy Armfield, Bobby Robson and Tony Book.

Guided

Let's take a quick look at these professional mentors. Paisley first. A north-east product of the Bishop Auckland amateur game, who was apprenticed to Bill Shankly, he guided Liverpool to the League's second spot at the first time of asking two years ago.

The championship pennant flew proudly over Anfield twelve months later, and this winter, while looking ahead, he has been studying Shanks' tremendous record of two F.A. Cup triumphs, three League titles, and ten successive European briefs.

Docherty, a fast talking nomadic character, knew when relinquishing the Scottish managership to take charge of Manchester United, he would be judged on the great traditions of Matt Busby, and a season without a prize would represent failure for a club with an *average* crowd of over 50,000.

He couldn't stop them going down in the initial campaign, but the chairman played a great part by walking in with a bottle of champagne, and saying: "Drink this, we'll soon be back". They were. And within another three years The Doc had rebuilt, though it's acknowledged the money flowed freely in each-way transfer deals and finally topped the million.

Assessment

Armfield, Blackpool defender in a record 568 games, and former England skipper, hauled Bolton out of the Third Division before moving over The Pennines to succeed Don Revie and Brian Clough at Elland Road.

Pipe smoking gentleman Jim, who always believed in only kicking the ball, has adorned the office wall with an old Lowry print titled, "The Football Match". It's in complete quiet contrast, of course, to the scene in which he's now involved yet suits the usual mood of calm assessment.

Robson, another man of the north country though of leaner stature than his old friend Bob, tells of difficult days while remodelling an Ipswich team with unknown youngsters who have gradually developed into top performers who are now artistes in their own rights.

Ruling one of the country's few solvent outfits, this 44-year-old dynamo has helped give the East Anglian ground a dramatic facelift with backing of a £520,000 profit on the transfer market while turning down the possibility of bigger wage packets with other clubs.

Book, one of the oldest Cup Final skippers in history when leading Manchester City out of the Wembley tunnel in 1969, has had his plans partly upset by a spate of injuries, especially the loss of such a star as Colin Bell.

He's come a long way since those early days when the time was mostly occupied laying bricks in the cider country of Somerset, and in the interim has won for himself F.A. Cup, League Cup and League championship medals, and, later, guided a team of his own to a League Cup triumph.

Some estimate of the talent in the pools these men control can be gauged from the fact that two-thirds of England's squad is recruited from just the five clubs we have been considering — which, again, provides an unspoken tribute to the bosses, the men who are lauded or hung, according to the mood of the fan.

PITY SACKED BOSSES

THE HIGH mortality rate of British soccer club managers never seems to deviate, these days, from an upward line on the national graph, yet nothing much is being done to arrest this disgraceful state of affairs.

Most folk seem to dismiss the constant news of unexpected upheavals rather summarily, without apparently realising that the growing toll has become so bad that the sport in these isles is getting a poor image abroad.

It may be hard to believe, yet it is a fact that there have been no fewer than 328 hot seat changes during a mere ten years though, of course, the chopper has not been wielded all the time.

Limitations of space prohibit publication of the complete list. Suffice to say that some of the personalities who have stepped in and out of office since the war include Roy Bentley, Jack Rowley, Reg Flewin, Stan Mortensen, Jack Crayston, George Hardwick, Stan Cullis, Jimmy Scoular, Nat Lofthouse, Ron Flowers, Bill Dodgin, Frank O'Farrell, Bill Ridding, Bill Nicholson, Malcolm Allison, Bill Shankly, and Sir Matt Busby.

When I discussed the position with one leading legislator, his assessment was most mild. He said it was perturbing though one generally felt better when remembering the fixtures, those remarkable fellows who were unlikely to pull up their roots.

But which are those? At this time, last year, I would have nominated Tony Waddington, Bertie Mee, and Bill McGarry because all had tenanted their particular posts many years, and there appeared to be no reasons for anticipating any departures.

Now, hold a moment. Come more up to date. Mee has left Arsenal after nine years as supremo. McGarry has gone from Molineux in his eighth winter, and, against all the odds, Waddington, of all people, has stepped down.

Britain's longest-serving boss, he had completed 25 years service at the Victoria grounds, 17 in overall charge of Stoke City, during which period a struggling outfit was dusted down and given a brighter and more attractive colour.

Facilities

Under Tony's guidance dressing-room facilities improved so that the players, at any rate, didn't have to shiver while stripping on stone floors, or gasp for air when smoking oil heaters were turned on. And the fans' comfort was aso considered.

The paper-thin crowds of the Second and Third Division days doubled, and then trebled as he gradually won more support from the fans in Arnold Bennett's famous Five Towns, and took the club up into the top circle.

Having begun a football career in the basement with the Cinderella club of Crewe Alexandra, he had first built from that level, too, and The Potters went up into the First Division with a hotch-potch of youngsters and The Potters went up into the First Division with a hotch-potch of youngsters and stars which included Dennis Viollet, Jackie Mudie, Jimmy McIlroy, and Stanley Matthews, whose rare goal finally clinched the Second Division championship.

There was not much clash in the till at the start, when the accepted habit was mostly always to sell their own promising teenagers and buy other club's cast-offs in a constant battle for survival.

Eventually, however, this man Waddington assembled teams of considerable strength, and finally ended 108 years of trophy famine in the area by carrying off the League Cup at the expense of Chelsea, and thanks chiefly to Gordon Banks, Jimmy Greenhoff, John Ritchie, Peter Dobing and George Eastham.

Then, aiming even higher, The Boss played the market in the grand style, staggering the oldest inhabitants. Because he paid Chelsea £240,000 for Alan Hudson, and Leicester City £360,000 for Peter Shilton. Big money whichever way it is looked at.

Some might suggest that such a £600,000 deal, added to the League Cup triumph, would be adequate memorial to his tremendous endeavours on behalf of these Old Originals of the Football League. Yet my best memory spotlight's Tony's first timid transfer venture — the signing of dear old Stan Matthews for £2,500.

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I WOULD LIKE to correspond with any European persons who collect football souvenirs and would like to change them for Maltese souvenirs. These persons I would prefer from Spain, West Germany, Italy, England or Holland. My name is Raymond Muscat, 76 Gafa Street, Mosta, Malta G.C.

1976/77 PROGRAMMES send SAE for latest lists containing league, Non-league, Scottish, Irish, Internationals, Cup games etc. Peter Holton, 72 Henderson Road, Forest Gate, London, E7 8EF.

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CHESTER STYLE from the Republic of South Africa would like to correspond with soccer fans with strong interests in England (London), Scotland (Glasgow), European, Latin America and North American football. Chester's other interests are Music, Politics and World Sport. Chester Style, 16 Bulbrand Road, 3600 Sarnia, Natal, R.S.A.

THE JUNIOR ORANGE BOWL international soccer tournament is seeking applicants for its seventh annual event on Dec. 27—29, 1977 in Miami, Fla. Competition will be for boys and girls in seven divisions including under-16, under-14, under-12 and under-10. The event seeks to promote good will and good soccer. For information write to: Wayne Martin, Jr. OB Soccer, Post Office Box 361164, Miami, Florida, USA. 33138.

Welsh pressure worried Czechs

by ERIC BATTY

NOT MANY years ago I would have been able to see both England v. Luxembourg AND Wales against Czechoslovakia, but the way things are organised now limits the number of international matches that anyone can see in a season, and there was a clear choice.

I couldn't see both, and having seen Luxembourg last year, and with the present England team making me squirm, the Wales v. Czechoslovakia game at Wrexham looked the best bet. I should have known better, for Wales at best are a team of triers (and they did try), while the Czechs I know have never been happy when playing against British type 'fight-ball'.

The Czechs can play football, as they showed in the 1976 European championship . . . but they don't like fighting football. Never did. And they have between them precious little experience of it, which augurs well for Scotland who have still to receive the Czechs at Hampden Park.

Scottish manager Willie Ormond knows this too. He was at Wrexham naturally, and apart from Welsh manager Mike Smith was probably the happiest man at the ground. I saw Ormond briefly myself, a huge smile spread across his face and why not? Wales obviously think they have improved their chances of qualifying for the World Cup while I (and Mr. Ormond) both know that all they did was open the door for the Scots.

Had the Czechs not been without Ivo Viktor in goal and their two centre backs Anton Ondrus and Jozef Capkovic it might have been different. Certainly Viktor would have played far better than Alexander Vencel while Ondrus would not have allowed his team mates to surrender as they did. But even with this trio I still think it most probable that Wales would have won because up front the Czechs showed nothing.

Marian Masny never once beat a man, the winger who did so well against England in Bratislava and looked very good in Yugoslavia. Zdenek Nehoda has been out of form for Dukla but could have been expected to rise to the occasion, and I know that given the right conditions Antonin Panenka is one of the most highly skilled inside forwards in the game. Highly skilled but as we now know, not competitive enough.

For the Czechs, Jan Pivarnik tried manfully both in defence and going forward, repeatedly trying to stir some life in his attack. Koloman Gogh at left back was not so good but I wouldn't blame him. Neither would I criticise their temporary captain Jaroslav Pollak or Karol Dobias who both worked hard in midfield, but with their defence looking ready to collapse at any moment, they had to play too far back to make any impact on the Welsh defence.

So the Czechs had a three and a half man team and little wonder that the Welshmen ran them ragged.

Next day I read all the Welsh edition of the daily newspapers over breakfast and without exception they hailed the Welsh win as a huge success. VICTORY OVER THE EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS! The phrase was repeated one way or another in every paper.

Of course it's a good line, but just like their counterparts who comment on England, they failed to recognise that this was an awful Czech team, that it was not even a shadow of the side you saw on TV last June, that in fact the visitors just laid down and died without a fight. That was the truth of the matter and not one journalist at the game was apparently perceptive enough to realise it.

On their showing at Wrexham, the Czechs are now no better than Luxembourg. They are back where they started when Vaclav Jezek took over on his return from Holland. Jezek and his assistant Dr. Jozef Venglos know it too. They tried putting on a brave face to the pressmen outside their dressing room, but they and I all know that the Czechs chickened out.

No blame reflects on Jazek or Venglos. They chose the best men available — and have no better players than those they turned out at Wrexham. Unlike England they do not have a deep well of players to pick from albeit all of the same standard. The team at Wrexham was the pick of Czech football — the cream. For in my view Viktor seems unlikely to play again and they have no one half way good enough to take his place.

Resources

But if Mike Smith does a better job for Wales than Revie does for England with far more limited resources this does still not make Wales a good team. They won at Wrexham because they had nothing to beat just as England crushed Austria some time ago by 7-0 only to fail against Poland shortly after. On that occasion, just like the Welsh experts against the Czechs, the English commentators failed to perceive that England had been playing a third class team against Austria and that was why they won so handsomely. Like England fans, the critics preferred to think that England were good. "Back on top of the world," was the phrase they used to trot out, but now they have learned better even if it took a long time, and was difficult to digest.

It will come trotting out again if England qualify for the World Cup and beat Italy at Wembley but for the moment they have this golden phrase safely locked away in reserve.

But back to Wrexham and the Czechs. Wales began cautiously, thinking they had a hard game on their hands, keeping enough men back to cover their goal adequately. To be fair they didn't kick (they didn't need to) and if one of the linesmen was about as much good as a corner flag, the referee Da Silva from Portugal was up to the job. I liked the way he booked Leighton James for deliberately rolling the ball away late in the game when a decision went against him. Da Silva didn't hesitate, out came the yellow card like a flash.

But what about Leighton James, clearly the most talented Welshman on view? For Derby, as for Burnley before them, I have noted that James is either very temperamental, unable to control himself in times of stress or very moody. He can look like the best winger in Britain at times, and at other he looks as if he doesn't want to play. We saw both aspects of James in this game.

The man of the match for me was little Brian Flynn who worked like a beaver, demonstrated a very high degree of skill, and was quick to spot that the Czech defence was caught flat when, late in the game he prodded forward a superb through ball for Leighton James to run on to and score the third goal. By that time however the game was all over as a contest. It never really got started, and overall proved to be a

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John Toshack (left) in action for Wales against Scotland.

washout, a non-event, to any neutrals that were present.

With the scoresheet blank, the Czechs fired in two shots, both from long range. One came from Dobias that went straight to Dai Davies, while the other came from stopper Ladislav Kurkemik who moved upfield to force Davies to turn his effort over the bar. But from the Czechs front men there was never any danger and Davies can seldom have had an easier time. From then on, all he had to do was pick two to three high balls out of the air and when the Czechs were 0-3 down he went out and down at the feet of Masny. Apart from that he was a spectator.

With Wales in command of midfield, fighting for every ball and throwing the Czechs right out of their stride, the Welshmen began to probe forward. With James showing only in flashes; Cardiff's Peter Sayer doing very little and PSV'S Nick Deacy looking out of his class (he had been converted to a centre back by his Dutch club), there was little or no attacking football. The game early on was played largely in midfield.

Then, with the first half almost over the Czechs scored. I say the Czechs because though the record books will put the point down to Leighton James it was in fact an own goal by Vencel, even though he didn't get a touch to the ball.

Flynn touched an indirect free kick to James and from fully 40 yards he crossed the ball. Not even James would claim that it was a shot . . . but with Flynn running in looking for a touch, Vencel started out from his goal and chickened.

Contributed

Vencel stopped in no man's land and not knowing he was doing the best thing, Flynn failed to reach the ball. But he had distracted Vencel and left him flat by making his angled run across goal and the ball passed between Flynn and the Czech 'keeper to roll gently into the net for one of the softest goals I have ever seen in an international match.

For the second half, the Czechs replaced second striker Jozef Moder who is in fact a midfield player, for Miroslav Gajdusek, who for my money is another midfield player. This is one of the Czech's biggest problems for since the decline of Inter Bratislava's Ladislav Petras, they have no one to play the striking role up alongside Nehoda. Gajdusek contributed no more than Moder and the game stumbled on.

It never was a contest, but the match truly died in the 65th minute when Wales got a second fortunate goal, John Mahoney was put away down the right, clearly three yards offside. But given that he ran the ball well, Vencel came too far out to meet him, and Mahoney squared the ball across goal. Sayer gave Jurkemik a nudge at just the right moment so that the Czech failed to clear and the ball ran on to Nick Deacy. I thought that he was going to fall over for a moment, for he seemed to stumble, perhaps from surprise, when he found the ball rolling across in front of him, but he recovered sufficiently to side foot the ball in with his left foot.

So Wales were 2-0 up, through a gift from Vencel and an offside goal and it had all been achieved without playing football. Only Flynn amongst the Welshmen, and James in flashes had the skill to play real football, but to be fair, with their mixture of second and third division players, plus Everton's reserve goalkeeper perhaps it was expecting too much that they should play.

Every Welshman ran himself into the ground . . . and perhaps one should not ask more than that from them. But at international level, I think one has a right to expect more. Still right back Pivarnik, and Pollak in midfield were pushing up and by so doing they exposed themselves to a quick counter attack down the Welsh left.

That was where Flynn made his break with the ball from midfield, to let go that beautiful ball for James to run onto and slot past Vencel as the 'keeper came out. That wrapped it up neatly for Wales and on the night one cannot say they didn't deserve it.

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Egon Christesen
Bylaugsvaenget 13
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From Colin Jose in North America

IMPORTED STILL DOM

AS the North American Soccer League begins its eleventh season of operation most clubs will continue to rely heavily on imported players, supplementing them with native born or naturalised Canadians and Americans to make up their rosters.

For the most part there are no wholesale changes in personnel this season with clubs retaining a basic pool of players while trying to fill those positions that gave them trouble in 1976.

The exceptions are once again the St Louis Stars and the Vancouver Whitecaps where North American talent will predominate as it has done throughout most of the existence of both clubs.

Here is a brief look at some of the clubs in the league and their players for the coming season.

Toronto Metros-Croatia: The NASL champions will have basically the same team as last season but must find replacements for Eusebio and Suhnholz who have moved to Las Vegas. Toronto will have a new coach in Branko Vidjak and he is expected to look to Yugoslavia to fill the gaps. Central defenders Mladen Cukon and Filip Blaskovic have returned from Yugoslavia while players like goalkeeper Zeljko Bilecki, defenders Damir Sutevski, Robert Iurusci, Teddy Polak and midfielders Gene Strenicer, Carmen Marcantonio and Bruno Pilas live in the Toronto area and have all been working out with the club.

Canadian international winger Peter Roe has returned to the club after one year with Toronto Italia and the Metros-Croatia are negotiating with Kenny Aird of Hearts.

New York Cosmos: With the club having moved out of New York City and into nearby New Jersey the New York part of the name has been officially dropped, however, the club which has become world famous since the signing of Pele will find it hard to escape the New York connection. This will be Pele's last season with the club before retirement and coach Gordon Bradley will be hoping that he can mark the occasion with the NASL championship.

The Cosmos recently beat Lazio 2-1 in Rome as part of a pre season tour with former Lazio star Giorgio Chinaglia scoring one of the goals. The Cosmos would seem to be one of the strongest teams in the league, but in order to win the championship will have to overcome the star complex and become a real team. Newcomers here are Vitomir Dimitrijevic and Jadranko Topic from Yugoslavia and Steve Hunt from Aston Villa.

U.S. internationals Shep Messing, Bobby Smith and Werner Roth return as does Canadian international Bruce Twamley. Keith Eddy, Mike Dillon, Charlie Aitken, Terry Garbett and Tony Field from Britain will be back in the line up as will Peruvian midfield star Ramon Mifflin.

Tampa Bay Rowdies: Tampa opened the season some weeks ago by playing two games against Leningrad Zenit. The first played outdoors before 40,000 fans resulted in a 1-0 win for the Soviet team, while the second played indoors in St. Petersburg, Florida saw the Zenit win again this time 8-7. A sell-out crowd of 6,000 saw Rodney Marsh score four goals for Tampa and then refuse to accept the award for the most valuable player.

Reports emanating from Tampa indicate that Marsh and Rowdies coach Eddie Firmani are not on the best of terms and that Firmani was not in favour of having Marsh return to the team this year. However, Tampa owners seem to have ruled otherwise and so the controversial star is back along with most of last year's team.

The club will have strong goalkeeping from U.S. international goalkeeper Arnold Mausser and also from Paul Hammond obtained from Crystal Palace. A notable new signing is Adrian Alston the former Australian World Cup star.

Connecticut Bicentennials: This team has dropped the name Hartford and substituted the name of the state for this season and also moved its location from the city of Hartford to New Haven where they will play in the Yale Bowl. In attempting to attract the traditional Portuguese following in this area of the U.S. the club has signed Joao Carlos from Estoril and Portuguese international Jaime Graca formerly with Benfica and now with Setubal.

Fort Lauderdale Strikers: Known as the Miami Toros last season when they had a disastrous year the club has appointed Ron Newman former coach of the Dallas Tornado and the Los Angeles Skyhawks as its coach. Newman has persuaded Gordon Banks to cross the Atlantic to keep goal for the team while retaining two players Ronnie Sharp and Roberto Aguirre who were key members of the Miami team that reached the NASL final

Rodney Marsh in action for the Tampa Bay Rowdies.

PLAYERS NATE NASL

in 1974. Newman is also concentrating on encouraging the development of U.S. players with Van Taylor, Roman Rosul and Tommy Mulroy who all showed promise last season returning.

St. Louis Stars: After a poor season last season John Sewell seems to have come to the conclusion that the standard of the league is such that American players must be supplemented by some Europeans in order to be competitive. Sewell has signed former Coventry City goalkeeper Bill Glazier, Peter Bennett a centre back from Orient and Dennis Burnett from Brighton. They will join such familiar names in the St Louis line up as U.S. international Al Trost and Denny Vanninger.

Dallas Tornado: Dallas opened the season with a 1-0 loss to Leningrad Zenit before 16,728 fans and with a team made up for the most part of American players. Glenn Myernick the league's number one draft choice has been signed along with U.S. internationals Steve Pecher and Neil Cohen.

Returning to the team are goalkeeper Ken Cooper who has served the team well over the years. Bobby Moffat, Jim Ryan and George Ley who all live in Dallas, while Jeff Bourne (Derby County) and Kevin Keeley and Bob Hope (Sheffield Wednesday) will be back before the season proper starts. A question mark hangs over Kyle Rote Jr. for some time now hailed as a U.S. superstar. In the last two seasons at least Rote has failed to live up to his publicity and spent most of last season on the bench.

Los Angeles Aztecs: George Best returns for his second season with the Aztecs, who this year will play in the vast Los Angeles Coliseum. Once again Best will be joined by Charlie Cooke and Ron Davies. New signing of note is Steve David of Trinidad obtained from the Miami Toros and the leagues leading goalscorer in 1975.

Vancouver Whitecaps: Canadian national team coach Eckhard Krautzun will once again coach the Whitecaps who will provide the nucleus of the Canadian national team as it strives for a place in the World Cup finals this fall. Returning are brothers Sam and Bobby Lenarduzzi, Buzz Parsons and Bruce Wilson. New Canadian signings are internationals Gary Ayre and Bob Bolitho both of whom played for local clubs last season. Krautzun has added Mirko Vukovic (Olimpija, Ljubljana) and Peter Stollwerk (Alemannia Aachen) for this season.

Seattle Sounders: One of the best organised and best supported teams in the league Seattle has so far been unable to reach the NASL finals. Last year's coach John Best has moved

Adrian Alston, the Australian international now with the Tampa Bay Rowdies.

to Vancouver as General Manager and his place has been taken by Jim Gabriel the former Scottish international and Everton player who has been with the club for several seasons as a player and assistant coach.

Throughout the winter Seattle have had a team playing in local soccer under Gabriel and doing quite well and for the coming season some of those players will get NASL experience. This year Seattle will have the nucleus of their team of the past two years with players like Dave Butler, Dave Gillett, Tom Jenkins, Adrian Webster, Manny Matos, Mike England and Harry Redknapp returning. Canadian international goalkeeper Tony Chursky is also back with the club after considerable negotiation. Seattle are also hoping to sign Mel Machin from Norwich City and Paul Crossley from Chester, to go along with new signings Steve Buttle and Mickey Cave from Bournemouth.

San Jose Earthquakes: Another team retaining the nucleus of their 1976 team the Earthquakes have already signed Paul Child, Johnny Moore, Mike Hewitt, Ilija Mitic and John Rowlands along with former Portuguese star Antonio Simoes.

Minnesota Kicks: Last years beaten finalists Minnesota will have Mike Bailey of Wolves joining them as a player and assistant coach to Freddie Goodwin. Alan West, Alan Willey, Geoff Barnett, Alan Merrick, Ade Coker and Ron Futcher all return and will be joined by Paul Futcher and two young players from Middlesbrough Ian Bailey and Stan Cummins.

SPAIN MEET HUNGARY

WITH A World Cup qualifier against Rumania coming up, Ladislao Kubala took the opportunity of having a look at 15 players in the 1-1 draw with Hungary in Alicante.

The game should have been in Vigo, but despite desperate efforts to relay a pitch churned up through the winter, there was never any chance Kubala would let his team prepare for the Rumanians on a lottery of a ground.

The Hungarians were on their way home from a tour of Central and South America, which had ended with a 5-1 defeat by Argentina, and they were well worth the draw after a game which provided a rare opportunity for two boyhood friends to get together once more.

Joszef Bozsik was among the Hungarian officials present at the game, while Ferenc Puskas had flown back to Spain from Chile, where he coaches Colo-Colo, for Real Madrid's 75th birthday celebrations.

Spain: Miguel Angel (Arconada half-time) — Capon, Benito, Pirri (Cortabarria ht), Camacho — Villar, del Bosque, Churruca — Juanito, Satrustegui (Solsona ht), Rojo I (Maranon ht).

Hungary: Gujdar — Torok, Belint, Kereki, Toth — Zombori, Pinter, Nyilasi (Nagy 63rd) — Fazekas, Kovecs, (Pusztai 57th), Varadi.

Spain could have gone ahead in the third minute, but Ignacio Churruca's shot came out off a post and it wasn't until the second half that the goals came.

In the meantime the Hungarians, though they surprised Miguel Angel with a couple of shots he couldn't hold cleanly, had slightly less of the play in midfield, where Vicente del Bosque was at his best.

Del Bosque doesn't have a lot of pace, but he's an intelligent player and given the room in which to work — as he was here — he can do a good job of organising an attack.

Unfortunately, though Juanito on the right was in sparkling form, Jesus Satrustegui in the centre was below par, and neither of the second-half substitutes, Maranon or Daniel Solsona, could make any impression.

So it was up to Juanito to provide most of the menace, with a couple of fine incisive passes which first Satrustegui and later Maranon wasted.

In the meantime the Hungarians, whose attacks mostly fell apart whenever the impressive Gregorio Benito — back for the injured Miguell — went into the tackle, took the lead after 58 minutes. Substitute Laszlo Pusztai, who had come on moments before, headed in Laszlo Fazekas's corner.

It took Spain 10 minutes to square it. Juanito moved across to the inside left position, carried out a one-two with Maranon and gave Sandor Gujdar no chance.

Jack Rollin spotlights the Cup Winners' Cup Finalists

Anderlecht go for the double

IN TERMS of pure historical advantage Anderlecht's achievement of reaching the final of a competition they won last year and being runners-up of another tournament seven years ago probably gives them some kind of psychological edge over Hamburg whose only European accomplishment was to finish runners-up in the Cup Winners Cup nine years ago.

Add to it that on that same occasion in 1968 when AC Milan defeated Hamburg 2-0, the match was played on Dutch soil in Rotterdam, and that this year it will be held in Amsterdam, might again tip some sort of scale in Anderlecht's favour.

And it is nearer for Anderlecht from Brussels to reach Amsterdam than Hamburg, though there is not a great deal in it.

In their respective leagues neither club can afford to coast things in the closing weeks. Anderlecht are having a rare tussle with RWD Molenbeek and Standard Liege for second place behind FC Bruges. And as for Hamburg they are in an even bigger scramble for UEFA Cup places if their Cup Winners Cup bid fails.

Anderlecht have virtually the same senior squad available as took the trophy last season. In fact they are at full strength because Erwin Vanden Daele has recovered from the injury which caused him to miss the match with West Ham a year ago.

The four Dutchmen are still there, goalkeeper Jan Ruiter, midfield player Arie Haan and strikers Peter Ressel and Robbie Rensenbrink. With the return of Vanden Daele, Hugo Broos has moved to full-back leaving Jean Thissen as his partner on the left and Gilbert Van Binst acting as sweeper.

Van der Elst of Anderlecht.

Fortunes

That combative veteran Jean Dockx shows no sign of giving up and forms a most useful destroying role in midfield alongside Francois Van der Elst and Ludo Coeck who had to go off in last year's final through injury.

Anderlecht's boss the experienced Raymond Goethals has had what could be described as a satisfactory first term back with the club after many years guiding the fortunes of the national side.

Hamburg for their part have a couple of players with Dutch connections in centre-back Horst Blankenburg once of Ajax but a German born player and Arno Steffenhagen who also had a spell with the Amsterdam club.

One of the feats achieved by Hamburg this season was to take three points off Borussia Moenchengladbach who have themselves reached the European Cup Final. It was Hamburg's 4-1 win over the German champions which ended their run of matches without defeat at the start of the season and recently they drew 0-0 with them, too.

In the semi-final, of course, Hamburg did well to come back from losing 3-1 in Madrid to Atletico and win on aggregate 4-3. They had little choice but to opt for all out attack but were fortunate to score after 19 minutes when a shot from full-back Manfred Kaltz hit a Spanish defender and was deflected in. But it gave Hamburg all the heart they needed with an adventurous 4-2-4 formation to back it and first Willi Reimann three minutes later and Ferdinand Keller made it 3-0 after 28 minutes.

Keller is an interesting player, of course, in his first season with the club having been signed from Munich 1860 but is now 30 years old and won his first full cap last season.

Centre-half Peter Nogly is in a rather similar position having won his first full cap at the age of 30 more recently however. But then Hamburg have a number of experienced players in their midst including sweeper Hans-Jurgen Ripp who is 30.

On the other hand goalkeeper Rudi Kargus is 24 and left-back Peter Hidienis 23. When using four midfield players normally, Hamburg have Caspar Memering, newcomer this season Wolfgang Magath and veteran 32 year old Klaus Zaczyk on duty.

Georg Volkert another 31 year old who had a spell in Switzerland with Zurich some few years ago completes the attack.

Other reserves standing by are Horst Bertl a striker who can fill in at centre-half in emergencies, midfield players Ole Bjornmose a Danish international now 33 years old and Kurt Eigl, plus reserve goalkeeper Vladimir Kovacic, a Yugoslavian and Uwe Mackensen a forward at 21 who is virtually a child compared with many of his colleagues.

Veteran coach Kuno Klotzer is 55 and in four years with the club has seen their prospects improve, though perhaps understandably he has kept around him experienced players. And despite the fact that it would need Hamburg to win the title this season domestically for a continued higher placing in the Bundesliga, Klotzer would be happy enough to win the Cup Winners Cup. And he leaves at the end of the term succeeded by Rudi Gutendorf so can take his full share of the credit.

While Hamburg are unlikely to be as adventurous against Anderlecht throwing caution to the winds through sheer necessity, they will be able to call upon the tremendous experience they have to switch their strategy according to the needs of the moment.

Anderlecht themselves are now an experienced team and the battle between the two could be an interesting affair and closely decided upon in the end.

However if it is a hard fought, gruelling encounter still in doubt late into the second half, then Hamburg's rather more ageing limbs might find it harder going especially in defence and this could just give Anderlecht the edge.

NEWS FROM HUNGARY by LESLIE VERNON

Good start to season for Vasas

VASAS are the team of the spring season in Hungary. During the past few years, they have been notoriously slow starters, and were obliged to open the second-half of the League campaign with the threat of relegation hanging over them. But this term, they had a reasonable "autumn", and with their customary gusto, they are now challenging for the title.

Manager Rudi Illovszky has had many problems with his squad in the past — on-and-off the field! Now, at last, Bela Varadi appears to be a reformed character, and his example encourages the younger players to concentrate on their football, instead of extra-curriculum activities, such as midnight trips to the Lake Balaton and unofficial drinking contests.

The balance of the team is just right with experienced key-players in every department, and promising youngsters complementing them. Goalkeeper Meszaros, full-backs Torok and Kantor, midfielders Muller and Zombori, and the tall striker, Kovacs, fall into the first category, with the brilliant Varadi supplying the extra dimension.

Their first breakthrough came against Ujpest Dozsa, when they defeated the current table-toppers 4-1. Zombori, who has established himself in the national side, beat three defenders in the second minute, and scored with a tremendous shot from 25 yards. In the 41st minute, a Zombori-Kovacs move created an opportunity for Izso, who headed the second, then, a mere 90 seconds later, Varadi rocketed a free-kick into the top-corner of the net.

Excellent

Nagy made it 3-1 early in the second-half, but Izso scored once again, giving Vasas a resounding victory. A week later, in front of a capacity house in the Nepstadium, they gave further proof of their excellent form by beating the fanatically supported Ferencvaros by exactly the same convincing scoreline — 4-1!

On this occasion, Varadi scored twice, making his total for the season 25, Izso and Kunjati once each. Ebedli managed a consolation goal for the green-and-whites. This Vasas double over the two most prominent teams in Hungary, has reopened the championship race, and instead of the usual contest between Dozsa and Fradi, we now have four serious contenders.

Staying with Vasas for a moment, one must say that their improvement is mainly due to their rediscovered ability to change the rhythm of their football, and that they have several players able to score goals — 78 in 26 matches!

Dozsa are still two points ahead of the pack, thanks to a good start, which included a couple of wins in the provinces. They have recalled Zambo, who is playing as well as ever, and occasionally use Ferenc Bene, who scored his 300th League goal against Diosgyor (and 301st) at the beginning of April.

The lilac-and-whites are brave enough to play an adventurous 3-3-4 system, but the mobility of central defenders Sarlos and E. Dunai, has been suspect in vital situations. Honved and Vasas are joint second at the moment.

The Army team are progressing by endeavour and hard work rather than more subtle attributes. Their defence is hard to break-down, and up-front, Kozma is still a potential match-winner. Ferencvaros, a further point behind, are suffering from a goal-famine. Magyar has been withdrawn into the midfield, where, with Ebedli and Nyilasi, he is a vital cog in a potentially world-class unit.

But his absence has weakened the forward-line (Pusztai-Vad-Pogany) — their haul of 59 goals is meagre for a team with championship aspirations. Yet, it is pleasant to witness that pre-season forecasts haven't been too far off-the-mark, and the "Big Four" of Budapest are in contention with eight more rounds to go. Haladas are the best provincial club, eight points behind Dozsa — Videoton are having a disappointing time, but in no danger of relegation.

Hamburg's easy victory over MTK/VM ensured that no Hungarian club had reached the semi-finals of any one of the European tournaments. Bad goalkeeping, vulnerability at set-pieces, slow thinking, lack of intelligence, and last but not least, a built-in feeling of inferiority, were the main causes of this sorry record.

On club level, the Hungarians have a long way to go to catch-up with the leading teams of Europe. I shall deal with the national team's progress next month — after they have tackled their bogy-team, the USSR, in the World Cup. (Better to use hindsight, than make optimistic noises, which might turn out to be merely false dreams. I am no fool . . .)

Perhaps the most encouraging news of the month has been the announcement that Ferencvaros have opened a "football kindergarten" for boys aged 8 to 9! These tiny tots (?) are recruited from local schools, and a full-time coach, Istvan Perlaky, looks after their "education".

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Chile qualify with Figueroa outstanding...

From ERIC WEIL

SOUTH AMERICAN group 3 would have been the most even based on recent matches in which neither Peru, Chile or Ecuador showed anything to make them favourites. But from the outset it was a matter of which country could repatriate more of their players on the books of foreign clubs in time and how they would fit in. In the end it was also a matter of Chile playing too defensively.

Ecuador had no players to bring from abroad which meant no improvement could be expected. Peru, with four players back home from their excellent 1970 team — back Chumpitaz and forwards Cubilla, Ramierez and Sotil — which reached the World Cup quarter-finals in Mexico, and other experienced internationals as Melendez, Rojas, Muñante and Oblitas, were able to count on their repatriated stars for longer.

Peru also made only one forced change in defence throughout and few changes up front, mostly substituting players during a match to unsettle the opposition. But in all only 15 players were used in the four matches. Chile, on the other hand, were unsure about some of their "foreigners" until the last moment and while the defence clicked, with veteran Figueroa (back from Brazil) outstanding, the attack did not — which was blamed more on coach Caupolican Peña's safety first tactics.

Peru started the ball rolling with a 1-1 draw in Quito (Ecuador) where the 2,800m altitude also tends to bother visiting teams. The result seemed satisfactory for Peru, but they might easily have lost. Ecuador had more chances and their leading scorer, Agentine-born Licciardi missed a penalty just before Paz y Mino's 80th minute equaliser. Peru's seasoned internationals, Chumpitaz, Muñante and Oblitas stood out in their defence and counter-attack game.

Contention

Chile gained an advantage when they beat Ecuador 1-0 in Guayaquil in the next game, but they lost it immediately when they were held 1-1 at home in Santiago by Peru — and this was the match in which Chile's defensive tactics put them out of contention. Peru's idea was to play for a point defensively and when home team Chile also appeared to do the same it turned into a contest between two sides defending and looking for an opening to counter attack — and both teams were disorganised.

When Ahumada scored Chile's goal just before half-time, Chile fell back even more. Peru took a disorganised initiative and only Muñante's individual play brought an equaliser with a 35-metre shot which surprised goalkeeper Nef 28 minutes into the second half. Even then Chile failed to come out of their shell and had no dangerous attacker.

Both Peru and Chile had little trouble with Ecuador at home, winning 4-0 and 3-0 respectively. The group's top scorer, Oblitas, netted two for Peru and Chile's outstanding defender, Figueroa, also scored a couple. This left Chile leading by a point and only needing a draw in the final game in Peru. As expected, they packed their defence in Lima and Peru seemed unable to get through. They seemed to be tiring when Sotil and Oblitas settled the issue in the first 10 minutes of the second half. Chile could not get back into attack — defender Figueroa came closest — and Peru won the group by one point.

. . . AND ARGENTINA

Argentina beat Hungary (on their first-ever visit) 5-1 in a friendly at Buenos Aires' Boca Juniors stadium with three first half goals from Bertoni, while Luque — who reappeared in the national team after a 20-match suspension (league matches included) — scored the other two. Argentina led 4-0 at half time and their fifth goal came just after the restart before Wimper netted for Hungary.

Argentina were on top from the start and, as coach Menotti said after the game, played together for a change. They had a penalty from Ardiles tipped for a corner by Gujdar before the scoring started. Argentina could have scored more, but they slowed up after the fifth goal and Hungary's consolation score looked offside.

Forward Bertoni, with his brilliant goals, stood out for Argentina, as did forward Luque and half Villa. Hungary, on the other hand, never got organised, showed weakness in defence and appeared tired after their lengthy Central and South American tour.

For the last 20 minutes Argentina brought on their youngest international, Diego Maradona (in place of Luque), but actually the record books show that he is not the youngest-ever to wear the white and sky blue colours. Maradona, born on October 30, 1960, was exactly 16 and four months on his debut against Hungary. Vicente Gonzalez had just turned 16 when he made his debut for Argentina in the South American Championship in 1921.

WORLD CUP QUALIFYING TOURNAMENT

South American Group 1

February 20

COLOMBIA (0) 0

BRAZIL (0) 0

Colombia: Lopez, Segovia, Caicedo, Zarate, Bolaños, Retat, Umana, Calero, Ortiz, Villarete, Caceres.

Brazil: Leao, Ze Maria, Amaral, Beto Fuscao, Wladimir, Givanildo (Cazapava), Falcao, Rivelino, Zico, Roberto, Gil (Valdomiro).

February 24

COLOMBIA (0) 0

PARAGUAY (1) 1 (Jara Saguir)

Colombia: Lopez, Segovia, Zarate, Caicedo (Verdugo), Bolaños, Amado, Umana, Retat, Ortiz, Villarete (Moreno), Caceres.

Paraguay: J. Benitez, Espinola, H. Benitez, Isasi, Aifuch, Insfran, Jara, Saguir, Sosa, Kiesse, Lazzarini (Aquino), Paniagua (Vera), Bareiro.

March 6

PARAGUAY (1) 1 (Jara Saguir)

COLOMBIA (0) 1 (Villarete)

Paraguay: J. Benitez, Espinola, H. Benitez Isasi, Aifuch, Insfran, Jara Saguir, Sosa, Aquino, Bareiro, Paniagua (Vera), Baez (Lazzarini).

Colombia: Lopez, Segovia, Zarate, Soto, Bolaños, Calero, Umana (Amado), Reta, Ortiz, Villarete, Moreno (Rojas).

March 9

BRAZIL (4) 6 (Roberto 2, Marinho 2, Zico, Rivelino)

COLOMBIA (0) 0

Brazil: Leao, Ze Maria, Luiz Pereira, Carlos Alberto, Marinho, Cerezo, Zico, Rivelino, Gil, Roberto, Paulo Cesar.

Colombia: Lopez, Segovia, Zarate, Soto, Bolaños, Calero, Retat, Umana, Ortiz, Villarete, Caceres.

March 13

PARAGUAY (0) 0

BRAZIL (0) 1 (Insfran o.g.)

Paraguay: J. Benitez, Solalinde, H. Benitez Isasi, Aifuch, Insfran, Jara Saguir, Sosa, Osorio, Lazzarini, Kiesse, Bareiro (Vera).

Brazil: Leao, Ze Maria, Marco Antonio, Luiz Pereira, Carlos Alberto, Marinho, Toninho Cerezo, Falcao, Rivelino, Gil, Roberto, Paulo Cesar.

March 20

BRAZIL (1) 1 (Roberto)

PARAGUAY (0) 1 (Baez)

Brazil: Leao, Marinho, Carlos Alberto, Edinho, Marco Antonio, Cerezo (Pintinho), Falcao, Rivelino, Valdomiro, Roberto, Paulo Cesar.

Paraguay: J. Benitez, Solalinde, Aifuch, H. Benitez Isasi, Insfran, Gonzalez, Sosa, Jara Saguir, Lazzarini (Espinola), Paniagua (Colman), Baez. (Sent off: Insfran 61m., Colman 82m.) Referee: Ramon Barreto (Uruguay).

Final standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brazil	4	2	2	0	8	1	6
Paraguay	4	1	2	1	3	3	4
Colombia	4	0	2	2	1	8	2

Leading scorers: Roberto (Braz) 3; Marinho (Braz) 2; Jara Saguir (Par) 2.

South American Group 2

February 27

BOLIVIA (0) 1 (Jimenez)

URUGUAY (0) 0

Bolivia: C. Jimenez, Campos, Rimaza, Lima, Valdivieso, Aragones, Angulo, Mezza, Morales, P. Jimenez, Aguilar.

Uruguay: R. Rodriguez, Ramirez, De los Santos, Salomon, Morales, Carrasco (Urunue), Graffigna, Pereyra, Victorino, Morena, Olivera (Carlevaro).

March 6

VENEZUELA (0) 1 (Iriarte)

BOLIVIA (1) 3

(Saucedo, Jimenez, Aguilar)

Venezuela: Romero, Fuenmayor, Elie, C. Betancourt (J. Betancourt), Salas, Marin, Moss, Echenausi, Iriarte, Chiazzaro, Flores (Soto).

Bolivia: C. Jimenez, Campos, Lima, Valdivieso, Rimazza, Angulo (Rivero), Saucedo (Morales), Aragones, P. Jimenez, Mezza, Aguilar.

March 13
BOLIVIA (2) 2 (P. Jimenez, Aragones)
VENEZUELA (0) 0

Bolivia: C. Jimenez, Campos, Lima, Valdivieso, Rimazza, Angulo, Morales, Aragones, Mezza, P. Jimenez, Aguilar.

Venezuela: A. Jimenez, Marin, Ellie, Toro, Salas (sent off 83m.), Echenausi, Moss, Iriarte, Flores, Chiazaro, Soto.

March 17
URUGUAY (1) 2 (Pizzani 2)
VENEZUELA (0) 0

Uruguay: R. Rodriguez, Moller, Taborda, Ramirez, Graffigna (Duarte), Santana, Pizzani, Cabana, Santelli (Carrasco), Urunaue, Olivera.

Venezuela: Romero, Ellie, J. Betancour, Marin, Moss, Echenausi, Iriarte, Chiazzaro, Flores (Soto).

March 27
URUGUAY (1) 2 (Pereyra 2)
BOLIVIA (1) 2 (Aguilar 2)

Uruguay: R. Rodriguez, Moller, Taborda, Del Capello, Graffigna, Santana, Pizzani, Urunaue, Santelli, Pereyra, Rodriguez, Cantero.

Bolivia: C. Jimenez, Campos, Rimazza, Lima, Valdivieso, Aragones, Romero, Angulo, Saucedo, P. Jimenez, Aguilar.

Final standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bolivia	4	3	1	0	8	3	7
Uruguay	4	1	2	1	5	4	4
Venezuela	4	0	1	3	2	8	1

Leading scorers: P. Jimenez (Bol), Aguilar (Bol) 3; Pizzani (Urug), Pereyra (Urug) 2.

South American Group 3
February 20
ECUADOR (0) 1 (Paz)
PERU (1) 1 (Oblitas)

Ecuador: Delgado, Mendez, Cabrera, Villena, Klinger, Granda (Mantilla), Villafuerte, Gomez (Paz), Ron, Liciardi, Nieves.

Peru: Quiroga, Soria, Melendez, Chumpitaz, Diaz, Velazquez, Quesada, Cubilla (Rojas), Muhante (Ramirez), Sotil, Oblitas.

February 27
ECUADOR (0) 0
CHILE (1) 1 (Gamboa)
March 6
CHILE (1) 1 (Ahumada)
PERU (0) 1 (Muhante)

Chile: Nef, Diaz, Figueroa, Quintano, Escobar, Prieto (Ahumada), Hodge, Reinoso, Miranda (Soto), Castro, Gamboa.

Peru: Quiroga, Soria, Melendez, Chumpitaz, Diaz, Velazquez, Quesada, Cubillas (Sotil), Muhante, Rojas, Oblitas.

March 12
PERU (1) 4 (Velazquez, Oblitas 2, Lucas)
ECUADOR (0) 0

Peru: Quiroga, Soria, Melendez, Chumpitaz, Diaz, Velazquez, Quesada, Rojas (Lucas), Muhante, Sotil, Oblitas.

Ecuador: Garcia, Mendez, Carrera, Villena, Klinger, Granda, Villafuerte, Figueroa, Paz, Ron, Nieves.

March 20
CHILE (2) 3 (Figueroa 2, Castro)
ECUADOR (0) 0

Chile: Nef, Galindo, Figueroa, Quintano, Escobar, H. Pinto, Dubois, Reinoso, Castro (Crisosto), Rojas (Ahumada), P. Pintos.

Ecuador: Pinillos, Klinger, Caicedo, Campoverde, Carrera, Granda (Figueroa), Villafuerte, Gomez, Pazimino (Nieves), Ron, Mantilla.

March 26
PERU (0) 2 (Sotil, Oblitas)
CHILE (0) 0

Peru: Quiroga, Navarro, Melendez, Chumpitaz, Diaz, Quesada, Rojas (Ramirez), Velazquez, Muhante (Lucas), Sotil, Oblitas.

Chile: Vallejos, Diaz, Figueroa, Quintano, Escobar, H. Pinto, Dubois (Ahumada), Inostroza, Reynoso, Spedaletti, Castro (P. Pinto).

Referee: Cesar Coelho (Brazil).

Final standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Peru	4	2	2	0	8	2	6
Chile	4	2	1	1	5	3	5
Ecuador	4	0	1	3	1	9	1

Leading scorers: Oblitas (Peru) 4, Figueroa (Chile) 2.

FULL INTERNATIONALS
February 21
HONDURAS REPUBLIC (0) 0
HUNGARY (0) 0
February 23
MEXICO (1) 1 (Solis)
HUNGARY (1) 1 (Torocsik)

Mexico: Reyes, Trujillo, Sanchez Galindo, Guzman, Vazquez Ayala, De la Torre, Real (Caballero), Solis, Isiordia, Jimenez (Acevez), Cuellar.

Hungary: Kovacs (Gujdar), Kereki, Balint, Kerekes, Toth, Nagy, Ebedli (Zombori), Pinter, Puztai (Fazekas), Torocsik (Benter), Magyar.

February 27
ARGENTINA (4) 5 (Bertoni 3, Luque 2)
HUNGARY (0) 1 (Weimper)

Argentina: Gatti, Tarantini, Olguin, D. Killer, Carrascosa, Ardiles, Gallego, Villa (Benitez), Houseman (Felman), Luque (Maradona), Bertoni.

Hungary: Gujdar, Kereki, Balint, Kerekev, Toth, Nagy, Ebedli (Weimper), Pinter, Puztai (Fazekas), Torocsik, Magyar (Varadi).

PLATINI NOT FOR EXPORT

by Peter Bills

MICHEL PLATINI, the most talented young player French football has produced for more than a decade, doesn't want to join the football export trade.

Platini, valued at more than £400,000 by his club A.S. Nancy, is one of the prime targets of European football spies preparing their bids for next season's new signings. But Platini has other ideas — he wants to stay in France.

Platini, the brilliant young midfield creator, has helped put French football back on the European football map. Yet his club, the comparatively small A.S. Nancy still look like missing out on European club football next season. Does that worry Platini with footballing giants from other countries waiting with open cheque books?

"It's perhaps a little disappointing but I'm not that worried" says Platini. "I am only 21 and I feel I have all the time on my side."

Whether Nancy can hold on to their most valuable asset remains to be seen. Already, Paris St. Germain officials have admitted their interest at almost any reasonable asking price but Platini says of their alleged interest: "It's only rumours — and they are around all the time."

So would the French giants of the south — last season's European Cup finalists St. Etienne — lure the talented youngster to their famous green shirts? It looks unlikely.

Platini says: "I doubt whether I will go to St. Etienne.

"When I do leave Nancy — if I do in time — I would like to join a team that will get better while I am there. Certainly, St. Etienne are a good team but I am looking for a side that are going up. I think St. Etienne can only go down now because they are at the top already and must go down sometime.

"I would have liked to have been in the European Cup with St. Etienne — it would have been a great experience. But I am happy to wait for a year or two before playing in Europe. I do not think we will be in Europe next year at A.S. Nancy but it does not worry me too much."

Platini believes the renaissance of French football is partly due to the cost of living which has rocketed in France. "A lot of interest has been created in the game because people have wanted to find something cheaper to do as a pastime" he says. "Everything has become so expensive that people have been turning to sport and especially football. It is very good for the game.

"I am not sure why French football has been so poor for some years. It is very difficult to say why. But I believe that now we have enough talented young players emerging to make French football strong for some years to come.

"Playing abroad? It would be a good experience but I feel I would prefer to play in France. It is my country and I would like to have success here. But I admire other sides — teams like Liverpool, Anderlecht, Real Madrid and Barcelona . . . they are all very good sides.

Attraction

"I know I can earn more money playing abroad. I think players in countries like Spain and Belgium can earn much more. But money is not everything to me for I can earn good money here in France. Of course, I want to earn money and good money in my career. But if I have the chance of a move, it will not be the most important thing for me."

At the moment, Platini is content to live the life of anything but a star attraction. He lives at home, drives a modest family-saloon type car and is still carefully guided by his father Aldo, trainer of two other clubs in Nancy.

Platini, seven caps for France already at the age of 21, is undoubtedly one of the brightest French discoveries for years. But he seems set to resist the financial lure of export to another European football centre.

And that is good news for both French football in terms of League soccer and also the French national side.

LEAGUE TABLES

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Atletico Madrid	30	17	8	5	52	28	41
Barcelona	30	16	7	7	62	31	39
Athletic Bilbao	30	14	7	9	51	37	35
Salamanca	30	13	6	11	30	29	32
Real Betis sevilla	29	13	5	11	38	37	31
Real Sociedad	30	12	7	11	52	36	31
Real Madrid	30	11	9	10	50	45	31
Valencia	30	11	9	10	44	40	31
Español	30	12	7	11	52	55	31
Sevilla	30	10	11	9	29	33	31
Las Palmas	30	12	6	12	47	47	30
Elche	30	10	8	12	42	45	28
Hercules Alicante	30	10	8	12	30	35	28
Burgos	30	12	4	14	38	45	28
Racing Santander	30	10	7	13	35	52	27
Celta Vigo	29	8	9	12	18	34	25
Real Zaragoza	30	8	9	13	38	47	25
Malaga	30	4	6	20	22	54	14

SCOTLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Celtic	34	22	8	4	75	37	52
Rangers	35	18	10	7	61	35	46
Aberdeen	35	15	11	9	54	41	41
Dundee U.	34	15	8	11	51	43	38
Hibs	35	8	18	9	34	34	34
Partick	35	10	13	12	39	44	33
Motherwell	33	10	10	13	52	54	30
Ayr	35	11	8	16	44	65	30
Hearts	35	6	12	17	46	64	25
Kilmarnock	35	4	9	22	31	69	17

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Torino	26	18	7	1	43	13	43
Juventus	26	19	5	2	43	19	43
Inter	26	10	11	5	33	21	31
Napoli	26	9	11	6	33	28	29
Fiorentina	26	9	10	7	32	31	28
Perugia	26	8	10	8	27	22	26
Lazio	26	8	9	9	29	27	25
Roma	26	8	9	9	26	31	25
Genoa	26	7	10	9	36	37	24
Verona	26	6	12	8	24	30	24
Milan	26	3	16	7	25	29	22
Foggia	26	8	6	12	28	34	22
Bologna	26	6	10	10	18	28	22
Sampdoria	26	4	12	10	24	36	20
Catanzaro	26	6	7	13	21	36	19
Cesena	26	3	7	16	19	39	13

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	36	21	8	7	57	29	50
Man C	37	19	12	6	52	28	50
Ipswich	38	21	7	10	63	36	49
Newcastle	37	17	13	7	61	40	47
A. Villa	33	19	5	9	63	36	43
Man U	35	16	9	10	61	48	41
W Brom	37	14	12	11	51	47	40
Leicester	37	11	17	9	45	51	39
Arsenal	37	14	9	14	56	55	37
Leeds	35	13	10	12	43	46	36
Middlesbrough	38	13	10	15	35	43	36
Birmingham	37	12	9	16	57	55	33
Everton	34	12	9	13	53	58	33
Norwich	39	13	7	19	43	61	33
Stoke	37	10	12	15	22	39	32
Q.P.R.	34	11	9	14	41	44	31
Derby	36	7	16	13	42	51	30
Sunderland	38	9	11	18	40	48	29
Tottenham	39	10	9	20	43	66	29
Coventry	35	8	12	16	38	51	28
W Ham	36	9	10	17	36	59	28
Bristol C	35	8	10	17	31	42	26

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Benfica	25	18	5	2	55	22	41
Porto	25	15	5	5	55	19	35
Sporting	25	14	7	4	43	23	35
Academica Coimbra	25	11	6	8	25	21	28
Vitoria Setubal	25	11	5	9	38	33	27
Boavista Porto	25	10	7	8	34	30	27
Varzim	25	9	8	8	33	33	26
Braga	25	9	7	9	32	31	25
Belenenses	25	6	12	7	26	23	24
Vitoria Guimaraes	25	8	6	11	31	29	22
Estoril	25	5	12	8	21	25	22
Leixoes Porto	25	3	14	8	13	25	20
Portimonense	25	6	6	13	26	41	18
Montijo	25	5	8	12	23	40	18
Beira-Mar	25	4	9	12	28	51	17
Atletico	25	3	9	13	19	56	15

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Bruges	30	20	5	5	58	26	45
Anderlecht	30	17	6	7	61	33	40
RWD Molenbeek	30	16	8	6	51	32	40
Standard	30	15	8	7	41	24	38
Lokeren	30	14	6	10	46	32	34
Lierse SK	30	14	5	11	40	35	33
Waregem	30	13	6	11	44	36	32
Beerschot	30	11	10	9	54	44	32
CS Brügge	30	11	9	10	51	46	31
Antwerp	30	11	9	10	35	41	31
Beveren-Waas	30	10	9	11	30	37	29
Kortrijk	30	9	9	12	37	43	27
Winterslag	30	9	8	13	36	40	26
Beringen	30	8	8	14	37	49	24
Charleroi	30	8	8	14	25	38	24
Mechelen	30	6	7	17	33	54	19
Oostende	30	6	6	18	37	61	18
Liege	30	6	5	19	26	71	17

AUSTRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
SW Innsbruck	27	16	8	3	44	17	40
Austria/WAC	27	15	7	5	53	33	37
Rapid	27	12	10	5	46	28	34
Admira/Wacker	27	10	8	9	33	34	28
VOeEST Linz	27	7	10	10	33	36	24
Linzer ASK	27	8	8	11	38	43	24
Vienna	27	6	11	10	24	29	23
Grazer AK	27	8	7	12	27	41	23
Sturm Graz	27	7	7	13	30	43	21
A. Salzburg	27	6	4	17	23	47	16

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ajax Amsterdam	31	22	5	4	61	22	49
Feyenoord	31	16	11	4	63	30	43
AZ'67 Alkmaar	31	17	8	6	71	25	42
PSV Eindhoven	31	17	7	7	58	31	41
Roda JC	31	15	7	9	47	32	37
Utrecht	31	14	6	11	52	60	34
Sparta Rotterdam	31	11	11	9	45	44	33
NAC Breda	31	10	11	10	38	49	31
Twente Enschede	31	10	9	12	45	35	29
Den Haag	31	8	12	11	43	38	28
Haarlem	31	10	7	14	32	43	27
GAE Deventer	31	8	11	12	34	56	27
VVV Venlo	31	7	11	13	31	49	25
Telstar Velsen	31	6	12	13	32	52	24
NEC Nijmegen	31	6	11	14	40	47	23
Amsterdam	31	6	11	14	31	50	23
EEV Eindhoven	31	5	12	14	24	58	23
De Graafschap	31	5	10	16	27	53	20

WEST GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bor. M'gladbach	31	16	8	7	49	29	40
E. Braunschweig	31	13	13	5	47	36	39
Schalke 04	31	14	9	8	67	49	37
E. Frankfurt	31	14	8	9	74	54	36
Cologne	31	14	6	11	72	59	34
MSV Duisburg	31	11	12	8	57	44	34
Hamburger SV	31	12	10	9	59	53	34
Bayern	31	13	8	10	66	61	34
Bor. Dortmund	31	11	10	10	67	56	32
Hertha BSC	31	12	7	12	52	48	31
Fort. Düsseldorf	31	11	9	11	46	44	31
Werder Bremen	31	12	6	13	50	56	30
VfL Bochum	31	11	7	13	44	49	29
Kaiserslautern	31	11	5	15	47	50	27
Karlsruher SC	31	8	10	13	50	64	26
Saarbrücken	31	8	9	14	37	50	25
Rot-Weiss Essen	31	6	8	17	43	66	20
TB Berlin	31	5	9	17	41	80	19

SWITZERLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Servette	22	14	7	1	68	27	35
Basel	22	14	5	3	54	30	33
Zürich	22	12	7	3	49	18	31
Neuch. Xamax	22	10	7	5	37	27	27
Young Boys	22	8	9	5	37	34	25
Grasshoppers	22	7	8	7	41	28	22
Lausanne	22	8	6	8	39	31	22
Chênois	22	6	8	8	29	39	20
Sion	22	4	10	8	19	32	18
St. Gallen	22	5	6	11	26	40	16
Bellinzona	22	3	2	17	19	73	8
Winterthur	22	1	5	16	19	58	7

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nantes	30	19	6	5	62	34	44
Bastia	30	15	8	7	68	46	38
Lyon	30	15	8	7	47	34	38
Nice	29	17	2	10	48	36	36
Lens	29	14	7	8	60	47	35
St-Etienne	30	13	9	8	41	27	35
Nancy	30	13	7	10	62	46	33
Metz	30	12	8	10	43	36	32
Bordeaux	30	13	5	12	57	48	31
St-Germain	29	12	6	11	50	46	30
Sochaux	30	10	8	12	38	44	28
Marseille	30	11	6	13	39	54	28
Valenciennes	30	9	9	12	39	42	27
Nimes	30	9	9	12	34	44	27
Laval	30	10	7	13	36	48	27
Troyes	30	11	5	14	34	47	27
Reims	29	9	8	12	40	50	26
Angers	30	7	9	14	34	50	23
Lille	30	6	5	19	31	51	17
Rennes	30	4	6	20	28	61	14

MORE NEXT MONTH

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